

THE
FOLLOWING
OF CHRIST.

Deuided into faure Bookes .

Written in Latin by the Learned
and Denout man

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AND

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Permissu Superiorum. M. DC. XIII.





TO THE
HONOVABLE
AND
VERTV OVS
ELIZABETH VAVX
Mother to the LORD
Harrodowne.

ONOVABLE
AND RIGHT
WORTHY,

THE publike de-
monstratiō which you haue lately

THE EPISTLE

giuen of your true desire to follow the footsteps of our Lord, vndergoing so heauy a Crosse for his sake, with so ready and resolved a mind, hath moued me to dedicate this little Booke of the *Imitation of Christ* vnto You: assuring my selfe that it will be no lesse gratefull to You to see it appeare in light, purged from many mistaken sentences which were in the former Translation, then the reading and practice thereof will be profitable to others; it being so diuine and excellent a worke, as in the opinion of such as can best iudge of this matter, of all the Bookes which are written, that treat of spirit and Christian Perfection, the holy Scripture excepted, it is inferiour to none, if it excelleth not all.

No 'booke hath byn more approued by generall consent, none more often printed and translated
into

DEDICATORY.

into diuers languages, none more esteemed, commended, yea commanded also by the chiefe Masters of Spirit of some Religious Orders, to be often read by euery one in priuate, and once a weeke publicly to all. So full of sweet sense is this diuine Flower, that the most spirituall bees may daily draw from thence great plenty of celestially hony. It is a dish of so diuine meate, that it neuer satiates the deuout mind: but as the Wisdom of God doth promise to all such as sit at that heavenly banquet; so shall they find in this spirituall food, *The more they eate it, the more they shall hunger after it.*

Eccl.

4.

And the reason heereof is, for that it containeth so great depth of spirit, and so great store and variety of heavenly documents, that it seemeth euer new to the Reader, and like another Manna affoordeth to euery one that de-

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lightfull tast which best agreeth with the palate of his soule: and none can loath it, but they whose lustes do carry them to Ægyptian slavery. A true Israelite may feed vpon it forty yeares together, and euer find such pleasing tast and increasing strength by vse thereof, as will sustaine him in the desert of this world, & enable him to goe on without fainting, till he arriue at his promised inheritance of eternall rest.

The practise of that which this Booke doth teach, couereth the soule with the rich garment of grace, and adorneth it with the splendent pearles of Euangelicall Perfection, which maketh vs more pleasing in the sight of God, then can the deckings of all earthly iewells make the sayrest Lady in the Kingdome where you are, appeare beautifull to the eyes of men. It returneth abundant

Gayne

D E D I C A T O R Y .

Gayne for sustained Losses , and enlargeth the Liberty which is now restrayned . It raiseth vp to cheerefull confidence the debased head, and placeth in a Throne of endles Honour those who in this world doe seeme imprisoned in the blacke cloud of disgrace.

To Y o u therefore who haue so willingly endured the losse of your earthly substance , I haue thought good to present this Euangelicall Pearle , and incomparable Treasure containd in a little roome. Heere you shall find the most perfect manner of conforming our selues to Christ our heauenly Patterne , and see the vertues set forth in their colours which did most shine in the life of our Lord himselve; and read in plaine and vulgar phrase those Lessons of high Perfection, which are commended vnto vs by the highest Wisdome, and which haue

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made as many Saints, as they haue had diligent and obseruant followers.

A C C E P T therefore I beseech you this little Present, presented by him who wisheth you much more temporall happinesse then your present state affoordeth; and that endles glory, wherof your present suffering is no vn-certaine pledge. This first of November. 1612.

Yours in all duty
B. F.

A T A -

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OF THE
FOLLOWING
OF CHRIST.

THE FIRST BOOKE.

CHAP. I.

*Of the imitation of Christ, and con-
tempt of all the vanities
of the world.*



HE that followeth me,
walketh not in dark-
nesse, saith our Lord.
Theſe are the words
of Chriſt, by which
we are admoniſhed,
that we ought to imitate his life,
and manners, if we will be par-

Ioan . 8.

A

takers

12 THE FOLLOWING

takers of his diuine light , and be deliuered from all blindnesse of hart . Let therfore our chiefest care be to meditate vpon the life of Iesus Christ .

2 . The doctrine of Christ exceedeth all the doctrine of the Saints: and he that had the light of spirit , would discouer therein a secret and hidden Manna . But it falleth out that many , who often heare the Ghospell of Christ , do yet feele in themselues but slender motion of any holy desire , because they are void of the spirit of Christ . But whosoeuer will fully and feelingly vnderstand the words of Christ , must endeauour to conforme his life wholly to the life of Christ .

3 . What will it auaille thee to dispute profoundly of the Trinity , if thou be voyd of humility , and therby displeasing to the Trinity ? High words surely , make a man neither holy nor iust ; but a vertuous life maketh him deare to God . I had rather feele compunction , then vnderstand the definition therof . If thou didest know

1. Cor.
13.

the

the whole Bible by hart, and the sayings of all the Philosophers, what would all that profit thee, without charity, and the grace of God? Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, but only to loue God, and wholly to serue him. This is the highest wisdom, by contempt of the world, to tend towards the Kingdome of heauen.

Eccles. 1.

4. It is therefore vanity to seeke after fading riches, and to repose trust in them. It is also vanity to gape after honours, and to climbe to high degrees. It is vanity to follow the appetites of the flesh, and to labour for that, for which thou must afterwards suffer more grievous punishment. Vanity it is to wish to liue long, and to be carelesse to liue well. It is vanity to mind only this present life, and not to foresee those things which are to come. It is vanity to set thy loue on that which speedily passeth away, and not to hasten thither, where euerlasting joy is permanent.

5. Call often to mind this pro

4 THE FOLLOWING

Eccles. 1.

uerbe: That the eye is neuer satisfied with seeing, nor the eare filled with hearing. Endeauour therfore to withdraw thy hart from the affection of visible things, and to turne thy selfe to the inuisible. For they that follow their sensuality, do staine their owne consciences, and loose the grace of God.

CHAP. II.

Of the humble conceipt of our selues.

Eccles. 1. &
Arist. 1. 1.
metaph.
cap. 1.

ALL men by nature desire to know: but what auaieth knowledg without the feare of God? Surely, an humble husbandman that feareth God, is better then a proud Philosopher that neglecting himselfe, laboureth to vnderstand the course of the heauens. Who so knoweth himselfe well, groweth daily more contemptible in his owne conceipt, and delighteth not in the praises of men. If I vnderstood all that is to be knowne in the world, and were not in charity, what would that help me in
the

the sight of God , who will iudge me according to my deedes ?

2. Giue not thy selfe to inordinate desire of knowledg : for therein is much distraction and deceit . The learned are willing to seeme so to others , and to be accounted wise . There be many things , which to know doth little or nothing profit the soule : and he is very vnwise , that bestoweth his labour about other things , then those that may auaille him for the health of his soule . Many words do not satisfy the desires of the hart : but a good life comforteth the mind , and a pure conscience giueth great assurance in the sight of God .

1. Cor 8.

3 . How much the more thou knowest , and how much the better thou vnderstandest , so much the more grievously shalt thou therefore be iudged , vnlesse thy life be also more holy . Be not therefore extolled in thy owne mind for any art or science which thou knowest : but rather let the knowledge giuen thee , make thee more fearefull . If

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Rom. 12.

thou thinkest that thou vnderstandest and knowest much; know also that there be many things more, which thou knowest not. Thinke not too well of thy selfe, but rather confesse thine ignorance. Why wilt thou prefer thy selfe before others, sith there be many more learned & skilfull in the Law then thou? If thou wilt know or learne any thing profitable, desire not to be knowne, and to be little esteemed of by men.

Gen. 8.

4. The highest and most profitable reading is the true knowledge & consideration of our selues. It is great wisdom and perfection to esteeme nothing of our selues, & to thinke alwaies well, and commendably of others. If thou shouldest see another openly sinne, or commit any heynous offence; yet oughtest thou not to esteeme the better of thy selfe, for thou knowest not how long thou shalt be able to remayne in good estate. We are all frayle, but thou oughtest to esteeme none more frayle then thy selfe.

CHAP. III.

Of the doctrine of Truth.

HAPPY is he whome Truth by it selfe doth teach, not by figures, and voices that passe away; but as it is in it selfe. Our owne opinion and sense do often deceaue vs, and it discernes little. What auai- leth it to dispute and contend about darke and hidden things: wheras for being ignorant of them we shall not so much as once be reprehended at the day of iudgment? It is a great folly to neglect the things that are profitable and necessary, and giue our mindsto that which is curious and hurtfull: we haue eyes and do not see.

2. And what haue we to do with the terms and distinctions of Logicians? He to whome the eternall Word speaketh, is deliuered from multitudes and diuersities of opinions. By that one Word all things do speake, and all declare the same: and this is the beginning, and that

Pf 93. 1.

Eccl. 3.

Pf 113.

8 THE FOLLOWING

which speaketh vnto vs. No man without that Word vnderstandeth or iudgeth rightly. He to whome all things are one, who draweth all things to one, and seeth all things in one, may enioy a quiet mind, and remaine peaceable in God. O God, the eternall Truth, make me one with thee in euerlasting charity. It is tedious to me often to read & heare many things. In thee is all that I would haue, and can desire. Let all Doctours hold their peace: let all creatures be silent in thy sight: speak thou alone vnto me.

Matt. 11.
Luc. 10.

3. How much the more one is retired within him selfe, and becometh inwardly sincere, and pure; so much the more, and higher mysteries doth he vnderstand without labour: for that he receaueth light of vnderstanding from aboue. A pure, sincere and stayed spirit is not distracted, though he be imploied in many workes: for that he worketh all to the honour of God, and laboureth for inward tráquillity, without seeking himself in any thing he doth. Who hinders and troubles thee

more

more then the vnmortified desires of thine owne hart? A good and deuout man first of all disposeth in himselfe his outward works: neither do they draw him to the desires of an inordinate inclination; but he ordereth the to the prescript of reason. Who hath a greater combate, then he that laboureth to ouercom himselfe? This ought to be our endeauour, to conquer our selues daily, to wax stronger, and be more able to subdue our passions, and alwaies in this way to get some ground.

4. All perfection in this life hath some imperfections mixt with it: & no knowledg of ours is void of darknesse, and ignorance. An humble knowledg of thy self is a more secure way to God, then a deepe search after learning: yet learning is not to be blamed, nor the only knowledg of any thing whatsoeuer is to be disliked, it being good in it selfe, and ordained by God: but a good conscience, and a vertuous life is to be preferred before it. And for that many endeauour, rather to get knowledg, then to liue well: ther-

fore they are often deceiued , and reape either none , or very slender profit of their labours .

Matt. 23.

5. O, if men bestowed as much labour in the rooting out of vices , and planting of vertues , as they doe in moouing doubts and questions : neither would there so much hurt be done , nor so great scandall be giuen in the world , nor so much loosnes be practised in places erected for vertue ! Truly at the day of Iudgment we shall not be examined what wee haue read , but what we haue done : nor how well we haue spoken , but how vertuously we haue liued. Tell me now , where are all those great Doctours and Maisters , with whom thou wast well acquainted , whilst they lyued & flourished in learning ? Now others possesse their liuings , & perhaps do scarce euer thinke of the. In their life time they seemed something , and now they are not spoken of.

Eccles. 2.

6. O, how quickly doth the glory of this world passe away ! Would God their life had byn answerable to their learning , then had their stu-

dy & reading byn to good purpose .
 How many perish in this world by
 reason of vaine learning , who take
 little care of the seruice of God ? And
 because they rather choose to be
 great then humble ; therfore they
 vanish away in their own thoughts .
 He is truly great that is great in cha-
 rity . He is truly great , that is little
 in himselfe , and that maketh no ac-
 count of the height of honour . He
 is truly wise , that accompteth all
 earthly things as dung , that he may
 gaine Christ . And he is truly lear-
 ned , that fulfilleth the wil of Christ,
 and forsaketh his owne .

CHAP. I V.

*Of Prudence , and Foresight in
 our actions .*

VE must not give eare to
 euery suggestion or in-
 stinct , but ought warily , & leasurly
 to pōder things according to the wil
 of God . But (alas) such is our weak-
 nesse that we rather often belieue ,
 and speake euil of others, then good.

Those

Tit. 1.

Rom. 1.

Matt. 18.
 & 23.

Phil. 3.

1. Io. 4.

12 THE FOLLOWING

Gen. 3.

Those that are perfectly vertuous, do not easily giue credit to euery thing that is told them, for they know that human frailty is prone to euill, and very subiect to faile in words.

Iac. 3.

Prou. 19.

Prou. 17.

2. . It is great wisdome not to be rash in thy proceedings, nor to stand stilly in thine own conceipts; as also not to belieue euery thing which thou hearest: nor presently to relate againe to others, what thou hast heard, or dost belieue. Consult with him that is wise, and of a good conscience, and seeke to be instructed by a better then thy selfe, rather then to follow thine owne inuentions. A good life maketh a man wise according to God, and giueth him experience in many things. How much the humbler one is in himselfe, and more subiect and resigned vnto God: so much the more prudent shall he be in all his affaires, and enioy greater peace and quiet of hart.

Prou. 15.
& Eccl. 1.

CHAP. V.

Of the reading of holy Scriptures.

TRUTH, not eloquence is to be sought for in holy Scriptures. Each part of them is to be read with the same spirit it was made. We should rather search after spirituall profit in Scriptures, then subtilty of speech. We ought to read deuout and simple bookes, as willingly as high and learned. Let not the reputation of the writer offend thee, whether he be of great or (mall learning; but let the pure word of truth moue thee to read. Search not who spake this, or that, but marke what is spoken.

2. Men passe away; but the truth of our Lord remaineth for euer. God speaketh vnto vs sundry waies, without respect of persons. Our owne curiosity often hindreth vs in reading of the Scriptures, when as we will examine, and discusse that which we should rather passe ouer without more adoe. If thou desire

Rom. 15.

1. Cor. 2.

Pf. 110. &
Luc. 21.Rom. 2.
& 10. &
Col. 3.

14 THE FOLLOWING

to reape profit, read humbly, plainly, and faithfully: neuer desire the estimation of learning. Inquire willingly, and heare with silence the words of holy men: dislike not the Parables of Elders, for they are not recounted without cause.

Prou. 1.
& 18.

CHAP. VI.

Of inordinate desires, and affections.

V H ENSOEVER a man desireth any thing inordinatly, he is presently disquieted in himselfe. The proud and couetous can neuer rest. The poore and humble in spirit, liue together in all peace. The man that is not vvholy dead in himselfe, is quickly tempted, and ouercome in small and trifling things. The weake in spirit, and that is yet in a manner subiect to his appetites, and prone to sensible things, can hardly withdraw himselfe altogether frō earthly desires. And therefore he is often afflicted, when he goeth about to retire himselfe from them: and easily falleth

into

into indignation, when any opposition is made against him.

2. And if he hath followed therein his appetite, he is presently disquieted with remorse of conscience: for that he yielded to his passion, which profiteth him nothing to the obtaining of the peace he sought for. True quiet of mind therefore, is gotten by resisting our passions, not by obeying them. There is no peace in the hart of a carnall man, nor of him that is addicted to outward things, but in the spirituall and fervent.

CHAP. VII.

Of flying vaine Hope, and Pride.

HE is vaine that putteth his trust in men, or creatures. Be not ashamed to serue others for the loue of Iesus Christ: nor to be esteemed poore in this world. Presume not vpon thy selfe, but place thy hope in God. Do what lieth in thy power, and God will assist thee. Trust not in thine own knowledg,

Hier.
17. 1.

Ps. 30.

Hier. 9.

nor

nor in the wisdome or prudence of any liuing creature: but rather in the grace of God, who helpeth the humble, and humbleth the presumptuous and proud.

2. Glory not in wealth, if thou haue it: nor in the power of thy friends: but in God, who giueth all things, and aboue all desireth to giue thee himselfe. Extoll not thy selfe for the stature, and beauty of thy body, which is dissolued, and disfigured with euery little sicknes. Take not pleasure in thy naturall gifts, or wit, least thereby thou displease God, to whome appertaineth all the good whatsoeuer nature hath giuen thee.

Exod. 3.
& 12.

Iob. 9.

3. Esteeme not thy selfe better then others, least perhaps in the sight of God, who knoweth what is in man, thou be accompted worse then they. Be not proud of thy good workes, for the iudgments of God are farre different from the iudgments of men: and that often offendeth him, which pleaseth them. If there be any good in thee, belieue that there is much more in

others,

others, that so thou maist the better keepe within thy hart the precious treasure of humility. It is no preiudice vnto thee to esteeme thy selfe worse then all the world: but it hurteth thee very much, to preferre thy selfe before any one. The humble enjoy continuall peace: but in the hart of the proud, is enuy and often indignation.

CHAP. VIII.

*That too much familiarity isto
be shunned.*

LA Y not thy hart open to euery one: but treat of thy affaires with the wise, and such as feare God. Conuerse not much with yong people, and strangers. Flatter not the rich; neither do thou appeare willingly before great personages. Keep company with the humble, simple, deuout, and vertuous; and confer with them of those things, that may edify. Be not familiar with any woman: but in generall commend all good women to God. Desire to be

Ecl. 8.

Pro. 5.

familiar with God alone, and his angels, and fly the knowledge of men.

2. We must haue charity towards all, but familiarity with all is not expedient. Sometimes it falleth out, that the same of some person that is vnknowne, is much esteemed; whose presence notwithstanding is not gratefull to the eies of the beholders. We thinke sometimes to please others by our company, and we rather distast them with our disordered manners, and the euill customes which they discouer in vs.

CHAP. IX.

Of Obedience, and Subiēction.

IT is a great matter to liue in Obedience, to be vnder a Superiour, and not to be at our owne disposition. It is much safer to liue in the state of subiection; then of gouernment. Many liue vnder Obedience, rather for necessity then for charity: and such are discontented,

and

and do easily repine and murmur. Neither can they attaine to freedome of mind, vnlesse they willingly and hartily put themselues vnder Obedience for the loue of God: Go whither thou wilt, thou shalt find no rest, but in humble subiection vnder the gouernment of a Superior. The imagination and change of places haue deceiued many.

2. True it is, that euery one willingly doth that which agreeth with his owne sense and liking, and is apt to affect those most, that are of his owne mind: But if God be amongst vs, we must leaue our owne iudgment, that so peace and quietnes may be the better preserved. Who is so wise, that he can fully know all things? Trust not therfore too much to thine owne conceits: but be willing to heare the iudgment of others. If that which thou thinkest be good, and notwithstanding dost leaue it for God, and followest the opinion of another, it shall be better for thee

3. I haue often heard, that it is more secure to heare and take coun-

sell, then to giue it. It may also fall out, that ech ones opinion may be good: but to refuse to yield to others, when as reason, or cause requirerh it, is a token of wilfullnes and pride.

CHAP. X.

Of the auoyding superfluity of words.

Matt. 4.
& 14.

Ioan. 6.

FLY the vnquietnes of men as much as thou canst: for the talke of worldly affaires hindreth very much, although they be recounted with sincere intention: for we are quickly defiled, and as it were enthralled with vanity. I could wish that I had often times held my peace, when I haue spoken: and that I had not byn in company. Why do we so willingly speake, and talke one with another, when notwithstanding we seldom returne to silence, without hurt of conscience? The cause wherfore we so willingly talke, is, for that by discoursing one with another, we seeke to

receaue

receauē comfort one of another :
and desire to ease our mind , ouer-
wearied with sundry thoughts : and
we talke willingly , and thinke of
those things which we loue best , and
most desire ; or of those , which we
feele most contrary vnto vs .

2 . But alas , often times in vaine ,
and to no end : for this outward
comfort is cause of no small losse of
inward , and diuine consolation .
Therefore we must watch and pray ,
least our time passe without any fruit
or profit . If it be lawfull , and expe-
dient for thee to speak ; speak those
things that may edify . An euill cu-
stome , and neglect of our owne
good , doth very much slacke the
raynes to inconsiderate speach : Yet
deuout discourses of heauēly things ,
do greatly further our progresse in
spirit , especially where persons of
one mind and spirit be gathered to-
gether in God .

Matt. 7.

Rom. 2.

Act. 1.

Rom. 15.

CHAP. XI.

*Of the obteyning of peace, and
zeale of spirituall profit.*

WE might enioy peace, if we would not busie our selues with the words and deedes of other men, which appertaine nothing to our charge. How can he liue long in peace, that thrusteth himselfe into the cares of others, or that litle or seldom recollecteth himselfe within his owne breast? Blessed are the simple and pure minds: for they shall enioy much peace.

2. What is the reason, why some of the Saints were so perfect, and contemplatiue? Because they laboured to mortify theselues wholly to earthly desires; and therefore they could with their whole hart, giue themselues to God, and freely attend to their owne affaires. We are too much lead by our owne passions, and too solicitous for transitory things. We also seldome ouercome any one vice perfectly, and

are

are not inflamed with a feruent desire to profit in spirit : and therefore we remaine cold in deuotion , and full of tepidity .

3. If we were perfectly dead vnto our selues , and not intangled within our owne breasts : then we might also haue some tast of diuine things , and feele the sweetnesse of heauenly contemplation . The greatest , and indeed the whole impediment is , for that we are not free frō our passions , and disordered inclinations : neither do we endeavour to enter into that path of perfection , which the Saints haue walked before vs : and when any small aduersity befalleth vs , we are too quickly dejected , and turne our selues to human comforts .

4. If we endeavour like men of courage to stand continually in the battaile : surely we should feele the fauourable assistance of God frō heauen . For he who giueth vs occasion to fight , to the end we may get the victory , is ready to succour those that fight manfully , and do trust in his grace . If we esteeme our pro-

gresse in Religious life, to consist only in these exterior obseruations: our deuotion will quickly be at an end. Let vs set the axe to the roote, that being freed from passions, we may enioy true peace of mind.

5. If euery yeare we would root out one vice, we should quickly become perfect men. But now often times we perceauē it goeth contrary, and that we were better, and of a more pure conscience at the beginning of our conuersion, then after many yeares of our profession. Our seruour and profit should increase daily; but now it is accōpted a great matter, if one can retaine but some part of his first spirit. If we would vse but a little violence in the beginning, then should we be able to performe all things afterwards with ease and ioy of hart.

6. It is a hard matter to leaue that to which we are accustomed; but harder to do against our owne wils. But if thou dost not ouercome little and easy things; how wilt thou ouercome harder matters? Resist thy inclination in the first motions,

and

and breake off euill customes, least perhaps by little and little they draw thee to greater difficulty. O, if thou didest consider how much inward peace vnto thy selfe, and ioy to others thou shouldest procure by demeaning thy selfe well; I suppose thou wouldest be more carefull of thy spirituall profit.

CHAP. XII.

Of the profit of Aduersity.

IT is good that we haue sometimes griefe and aduersities: for they often make a man enter into himselfe, and remember that he is heere in banishment, and ought not to place his trust in any worldly thing. It is good that we be sometimes contradicted; & that there be an euill or hard conceipt had of vs: and this, although we do, and intend well. These things help often to the attayning of humility, and defend vs from vaine-glory: for then we chiefly seeke God for our inward witnesse; when outwardly we be

contemned by men, and when there is no credit giuen vnto vs .

2. And therefore a man should settle himself so fully in God, that he needed not to seeke many comforts of men. When a good and vertuous man is afflicted, tempted, or troubled with euill thoughts; then he vnderstandeth better the great need he hath of Gods assistance, without whose help he perceaueth he can do nothing that is good. The also he sorroweth, lamenteth, and prayeth for the miseries he suffereth. Then is he weary of liuing longer, and wisheth that death would come, that he might be dissolued, and be with Christ. Then also he well perceaueth, that complete security, and perfect peace cannot be had in this world.

CHAP. XIII.

Of resisting Temptations.

SO long as we liue in this world we cannot be without tribulation and temptation: for as it is wri-

ten in Iob : Temptation is the life of man vpon earth. Euery one therfore ought to be carefull, and diligently to arme himselfe with praier against his temptations, least the Diuell find time and place to deceaue him; who neuer sleepeth; but goeth about seeking whome he may deuoure. No man is so perfect and holy, but hath somtimes temptations: and we cannot be altogeather free from them.

2. Temptations are often profitable vnto men; though they be troublesome, and grieuous: for in them man is humbled, purged, and instructed. All the Saints haue passed and profited through many tribulations and temptations; & they that could not beare temptations, became reprobate & fell from God. There is no order so holy, nor place so secret, where there be not temptations or aduersities.

3. There is no man that is altogeather free from temptations, whilst he liueth on earth: for in our selues is the cause therof, being born with inclination to euill. When one temptation or tribulation goeth

away,

away, another commeth: and we shall euer haue something to suffer, because we haue lost that innocency with which we were created. Many seeke to fly temptations, and do fall more grieuously into the. By flight alone we cannot ouercome; but by patience and true humility, we become stronger then all our enemies.

4. He that only auoideth them outwardly, and doth not plucke them vp by the root, shall profit little: yea temptation will the sooner returne vnto him; and he shall feelee himselfe in worse case then before. By little and little, and by patience with longanimity (through Gods help) thou shalt more easily ouercome, then with violence, and thine owne importunity. Often take counsell in temptations, and deale not roughly with him that is tempted; but giue him comfort, as thou wouldest wish to be done to thy selfe.

5. The beginning of all euill temptations, is inconstancy of mind, and little confidence in God: for as a ship without a sterne is tossed to

and

and fro with the waues: so the man that is negligent, and leaueth his purpose, is many waies tempted: Fyre trieth iron, and temptation a iust man. We know not oftentimes what we are able to do, but temptations do shew vs what we are. We must be watchfull, especially in the beginning of the temptation; for the enemy is then more easily overcome, if he be not suffered to enter the dore of our harts, but be resisted without the gate at his first knocke. Wherefore one said: Withstand the beginnings, for an after-remedy comes often to late. First there commeth to the mind an euill thought, then a strong imagination therof, afterwards delight, and an euill motion, and then consent: and so by little and little our wicked enemy getteth full entrance, whilst he is not resisted in the beginning. And how much the longer one is negligent in resisting: so much weaker doth he become daily, and the enemy stronger against him.

6. Some suffer greatest temptations in the beginning of their cor-

Quid. l. i.
de remed
amoris.

uersion; others in the later end; others againe are much troubled almost through the whole time of their life. Some are but easily tempted according to the wisdom, and equity of the diuine appointment, which weigheth the state and deserts of men; and ordaineth all things for the sauing of his elect and chosen seruants.

7. We ought not therefore to despair when we are tempted; but so much the more feruently to pray vnto God, that he will vouchsafe to help vs in all tribulation; who surely according to the saying of S. Paul, will make with temptation such issue, that we may be able to sustaine it. Let vs therefore humble our selues vnder the hand of God in all temptation and tribulation; for he will saue, and exalt the humble in spirit.

8. In temptations and afflictions man is proued, how much he hath profited; and his merit is therby the greater before God, and his vertues do more openly appeare. Neither is it any great matter if a man be de-

uout and feruent, when he feeleth no heauines: but if in time of aduersity he beare himself patiently, there is hope of great good. Some are kept from great temptations, and are often ouercome in small ones, which do daily occurre; to the end that being humbled, they may neuer presume on themselves in great matters, who in so small things do see themselves so weake.

CHAP. XIV.

Of auoyding rash Iudgement.

TVRNE thine eyes vnto thy selfe, and beware thou iudge not rashly the deeds of other men. In iudging of others a man alwaies laboureth in vaine, often erreth, and quickly sinneth; but in iudging & discusing of himselfe, he alwaies laboureth fruitfully. We often iudge of things according to our owne desire; for priuate affection bereaues vs easily of true iudgment. If God were alwaies the pure intention of our desire, we should not be so

much

Matt. 7.
Rom. 25.
Eccls. 3.

much troubled with the repugnance of our sensuality.

2. But often times some inward secret inclination, or outward affection occurreth, which draweth vs after it. Many secretly seeke themselves in their actions, and know it not. They seeme also to liue in good peace of mind, when things are don according to their will, and opinion; but if it succeed otherwise then they desire, they are straight waies troubled, and much afflicted. The diuersities of iudgments and opinions, cause often dissentions betwene friends and neighbours, betwene religious and deuout persons.

3. An old custome is hardly broken; and no man is willingly lead further then himselfe liketh. If thou dost more rely vpon thine owne reason or industry, then vpon the vertue of obedience to Iesus Christ; it wilbe long before thou be illuminated with grace, for Almighty God will haue vs perfectly subiect vnto him, and that we transcend the narrow limits of human reason, enflamed with his loue.

Matt. 12.

Luc 12.

Hier. 13.

CHAP. XV.

Of Workes done of Charity.

FOR no worldly thing, nor for the loue of any man, is any euil to be done: but yet for the profit of one that standeth in need, a good worke is sometimes to be left off, or chaunged also for a better. For by doing this, a good worke is not lost, but changed into another of greater merit. The exteriour worke without charity profiteth nothing; but whatsoeuer is done of charity be it neuer so little and contemptible in the sight of the world, it is fruitfull, and of great esteeme in the sight of God. For God weigheth more with how much loue one worketh, then how much he doth. He doth much, that loueth much.

2. He doth much that doth a thing well: he doth well that rather serueth the common good of others, then his owne will. Oftentimes it seemeth to be charity, and it is rather carnality: because naturall in-

Matt. 18.

1. Cor. 13.

Luc. 7.

Phil. 2.

clination, selfe-will, hope of reward, and desire of our owne commodity will seldome be wanting.

Phil. 2. 3.
& 1. Cor.
13.

Pf. 17. &
24.

3. He that hath true and perfect charity, seeketh himselfe in nothing; but only desireth in all things that the glory of God should be exalted. He also enuieeth none; because he loueth no priuate good: neither wil he reioyce in himselfe; but wisheth aboue al things to enioy God. He attributeth nothing that is good to any man, but wholly referreth it vnto God, from whom, as from the fountaine, all things proceed: in whom finally all Saints haue perfect rest, by fruition of his glory. O, he that had one sparke of perfect charity, how easily would he discerne, that all earthly things be full of vanity!

CHAP. XVI.

Of bearing with the defects of others.

THOSE things that a man cannot amend in himselfe or in others, he ought to suffer patiently, vntil God ordaine otherwise. Think that perhaps it is better so, for thy

tryall

tryall and patience, without which our merits are not much to be esteemed. Thou oughtest to pray notwithstanding when thou hast such impedimēts, that God would vouchsafe to help thee, and that thou maist beare them patiently.

Matt. 6.

Luc. 11.

2. If one that is once or twice warned doth not amend, contend not with him; but cōmit all to God, that his will may be fulfilled, and his name honoured in all his seruāts, who knoweth how to turne euill into good. Endeauour to be patient in bearing with the defects and infirmities of others: for that thy selfe also hast many things, which must be suffered by others. If thou canst not make thy selfe such an one as thou wouldest; how canst thou expect to haue another in all things to thy liking? We would willingly haue others perfect, and yet we amend not our owne faults.

Matt. 6.

Theff. 5.
& Io. 1.
Luc. 6.

3. We wil haue others seuerely corrected, and will not be corrected our selues. The large liberty of others displeaseth vs: and yet we will not haue our desires denied vs. We

will haue others kept vnder by rigorous lawes; but in no sort will we our selues be restrained. And thus it appeareth, how seldome we weigh our neighbour in the same ballance with our selues. If all men were perfect, what should we haue to suffer of our neighbour for God?

Gal. 6.

1. Thes. 5.
& 1. Cor.
12.

4. But now God hath thus ordained, that we may learne to beare one anothers burden: for no man is without defect, no man without burden, no man sufficient of himselfe, no man endued with so much wisdom as he needeth: but we ought to beare with one another, comfort one another, help, instruct, & admonish one another. Aduersity best discouereth how great vertue ech one hath: for occasions make not a man fraile, but do shew what he is.

CHAP. XVII.

Of Religious life.

THov must learne to break thy owne will in many things, if thou wilt haue peace, and concord
with

with others. It is no small matter to dwell in communitiy, or in a congregation, & to conuerse therein without complaint, and to perseuer there faithfully vntill death. Blessed is he that hath there liued well, and ended happily. If thou wilt perseuer in grace as thou oughtest, and profit in vertue, esteeme thy selfe as a banished man, and a pilgrim vpon earth. Thou must be cōtented for the loue of Christ to be esteemed as a foole in this world, if thou desire to lead a vertuous, and perfect religious life.

2. The wearing of religious habit, and shauing of the Crowne do little profit; but chang of manners, and perfect mortification of passiōs make a true religious man. He that seeketh any thing els but God, and the health of his soule, shall find nothing but tribulation & sorrow. Neither can he remaine long in peace, that laboureth not to be in the meaneſt place, and subiect to all.

3. Thou camst to serue, not to be serued. Know that thou wast called to suffer and to labour, not to be idle, or to spend thy time in talke.

1. Pet. 2.

Eccles. 1.
& 4.

Matt. 20.

Heere in the schoole of Christ men are proued as gold in the furnace. Here no man can stand, vnlesse he humble himselfe with his whole hart, for the loue of God.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the examples of the holy Fathers.

Heb. 11.

CONSIDER the liuely examples of the holy Fathers, in whom true perfection and religion shined; and thou shalt see how little it is, and almost nothing, which we do now in these daies. Alas, what is our life if it be compared to them! The Saints and friends of Christ serued our Lord in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakednesse, in labour and wearines, in watching and fasting, in prayer and holy meditations, in persecutions and many reproaches.

2. O, how many and grievous tribulations suffered the Apostles, Martyrs, Confessours, Virgins, & all the rest that endeauoured to fol-

low

low the steps of Christ! They hated their liues in this world, that they might possesse their soules in euerlasting life. O, How strait and poore a life led the holy Fathers in the wilderness! How long and grievous tēptations suffered they! How often and how grievously were they assaulted by their Ghostly enemy! How feruent praier offered they daily to God! How rigorous abstinence did they vse! How feruent zeale, and care had they of their spirituall profit! How strong, and continuall a combat had they for the ouercoming of vices! How pure and vpright intention kept they vnto God! In the day they laboured, and in the night they attended to continuall prayer, although when they laboured also, they ceased not from mentall prayer.

3. They spent all their tyme with profit: every houre seemed short for the seruice of God: and for the great sweetnes they had in contemplation, they forgot the necessity of corporall refection. They renounced all riches, dignities, ho-

Ioan. 12.

Matt. 7.

nours, friends and kinsfolkes; they desired to haue nothing which appertained to the world; they scarce tooke things necessary for the sustenance of life; they grieved to serue their bodies, euen in necessity. They were poore in earthly things, but rich in grace and vertues. Outwardly they wanted, but inwardly they were replenished with grace, and spirituall comfort.

4. They were strangers in the world, but neere and familiar friends to God. They seemed to themselves as nothing, and abiect to this world: but they were precious, and beloved in the eyes of God. They were grounded in true humility, liued in simple obedience, walked in charity and patience: and therefore they profited dayly in spirit, and obteyned great grace in Gods sight. They were giuen for an example and patterne of pefection in Gods Church, and their example should more stir vs vp to a desire of our spirituall profit, then the number of the lukewarme and dissolute liuers draw vs to the neglect thereof.

5. O, how great was the feruour of all religious persons in the beginning of their holy institution! How great was their deuotion to prayer! How diligent emulation of vertue! How exact discipline flourished! How great reuerence and obedience, vnder the rule of their Superiour, obserued they in all things! Their footsteps yet remaining do testify that they were indeed holy and perfect men; who fighting so valiantly, trode the world vnder their feet. Now he is greatly accompted of, that breaketh not the rule, and that can with patience endure that which he hath professed.

6. O couldnes and negligence of our time, that we so quickly decline from our first feruour, and are come to that passe, that very slouth and couldnes of spirit makes our owne liues tedious vnto vs! Would to God the desire to profit in vertue did not wholly sleepe in thee, who hast often seene the holy examples of deuout and religious soules.

CHAP. XIX.

Of the Exercise of a good, and Religious person.

Matt. 5.

Pf. 33.

Heb. 4.

Pf. 15.

THE life of a Religious person ought to shine with all virtues; that he may inwardly be such as outwardly he seemeth to men. And with reason thou oughtest to be much more within, then is perceived without: for God behouldeth the hart, whom we ought most highly to reuerence whersoever we are, and walke in purity like Angels in his sight; and to renew dayly our purposes, and styr vp our selues to seruour, as though this were the first day of our conuersion; and to say: Help me, my God, in this my good purpose, and in thy holy seruice; and graunt that I may now this day begin perfectly: for that which I haue done hitherto, is nothing.

2. According to our purpose, shalbe the successe of our profit, and much diligence is necessary to him

that

that will profit much. And if he that firmly purposeth, often faileth; what shall he do, that seldome purposeth any thing, or with little certainty? It may fall out sundry waies that we leaue off our purpose: and if for light occasiōs we omit our accustomed exercises, it seldome passeth without some losse. The purpose of iust men is rather grounded vpon the grace of God, then on their owne wisdom, in whom also they alwaies haue confidence, in whatsoever they take in hand. For man doth purpose, but God disposeth: neither is the way of man in his owne hands.

3. If an accustomed exercise be sometimes omitted for some worke of charity, or of intention to profit our neighbour, it may easily afterward be recouered: but if it be lightly left through inconstancy or negligence, it is an offence, and will proue hurtfull. Though we endeavour what we can, yet shall we faile in many things. But yet we must alwaies purpose something certaine, especially against that which most

hin-

Prou. 16.

Eccles. 7.

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hinders vs We must examine well, and order both our exteriour and interiour actions; for that both are expedient for our progresse in vertue.

Deut.4.

4. If thou canst not alwaies recollect thy selfe, yet do it sometimes, and that at least once euery day; to wit in the morning, or euening. In the morning make thy good purpose; in the euening examine thy selfe what thou hast byn that day in word, deed, or thought: for that in these oftentimes perhaps thou hast offended God, and thy neighbour. Arme thy selfe with courage against the malicious attempts of thine enemy. Refraine Gluttony & thou shalt more easily bridle all the disordered inclinations of the flesh. Neuer be altogeather idle, but either reading, or writing, or praying, or meditating, or labouring something of profit for the common good: but bodily exercises are to be discreetly vsed, and not to be vndertaken equally of all.

5. Those things that be not common, are not to be done in the sight
of

of all : for priuate things are best done in secret . But thou must beware, thou neglect not that to which thou art bound by common rule, and be ready in performing thy priuate deuotions : but hauing fully & faithfully accomplished all thy duties , and those things that were enioyned thee, if thou hast further leasure , returne to thy selfe as thy deuotion desireth . All cannot vie the same exercise, but one is more conuenient for this person , another for that . According to the diuersity of times also , diuers exercises are fitting : for some suite better with festiuall dayes , others with daies of labour . We haue need of one kind in temptations, and of others in time of peace and quiet . We desire to thinke of other things when we are sorrowfull , then we do when we are cheerfull in our Lord .

6. When principall feasts draw neere , good exercises are to be renewed ; & the intercessions of Saints more seruently to be implored . Frō feast to feast, we should make some good purpose , as though we were

then

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then to depart out of this world, & to come to the euerlasting feasts of heauen. And therefore we ought to prepare our selues carefully at holy times, and to liue more deuoutly, and to keep more exactly all things that we are to obserue, as though shortly we were to receaue reward of our labour at Gods hands.

Rom. 9.

Luc. 12.

Matt. 24.

7. And if it be differred, let vs think that we were not well prepared, nor worthy as yet of so great glory, as shall be reuealed in vs at the time appointed: and let vs labour to prepare ourselues better for our departure. Blessed is that seruant (sayth S. Luke the Euangelist) whom when his Lord commeth, he shall find watching: verily I say vn-to you, he shall place him ouer all that he possesseth.

CHAP. XX.

*Of the loue of Solitude, and
Silence.*

SEEKE a fit time to attend to thy selfe, and often thinke of
the

the benefits of God. Leauē curious things. Read ouer such matters, as may cause rather compunction, the labour of much study. If thou withdraw thy selfe from superfluous talke, and idle wandring about, as also from hearing of newes and tales; thou shalt find sufficient, and fit time to thinke of good things. The greatest Saints auoyded the company of men as much as they could, and chose to liue to God in secret.

2. One said: As often as I haue bene amongst men, I haue returned lesse man. The same we find by experience when we talke long. It is easier to keep silence altogether, then not to exceed in words. It is easier for a man to keepe home, then to demeane himselfe as he ought in all things abroad. He therefore that desireth to attaine to internall, and spirituall graces, ought with Iesus to withdraw himselfe from the people. No man goeth safely abroad, but he that gladly keepeth home. No man securely gouerneth, but he that delighteth to liue in subiection.

Heb. 3.

Senec.
ep. 7.

Matt. 4.

Eccles. 3.

No man securely commandeth, but he that hath learned readily to obey.

3. No man securely reioyceth, vnlesse he hath within him the testimony of a good conscience. And yet the security of Saints was alwaies full of the feare of God. Neither were they lesse carefull and humble in themselues, for that they shined outwardly with grace, and great vertues. But the security of euill men riseth of pride and presumption, and in the end deceaueth them. Neuer promise to thy selfe security in this life, although thou seeme to be a good Religious man, or deuout Hermite.

4. Oftentimes those, who in the iudgment of men were of better esteeme, haue byn in greatest danger, by reason of their too much confidence. Wherefore it is more profitable to many, not to be altogeather free from temptations, but to be often assaulted; least they should be too secure, and so perhaps be lifted vp in pride: least also they should too freely giue themselues to out-

ward

ward comforts. O, how good a conscience should he keep, that would neuer seeke transitory ioy! would neuer busy him selfe with the things of this world! and how great peace and quietnes should he possesse, that would cut off all vaine solicitude, & only thinke of diuine things, and such as are profitable for his soule, and place all his hope in God!

5. No man is worthy of heavenly comfort, vnlesse he haue diligently exercised himselfe in holy compunction. If thou desirest true contrition of hart, retire thy selfe into some secret and solitary place, and exclude from thy mind the tumultes, & vnquietnes of the world, as it is written: In your chambers be ye sory. In thy Cell thou shalt find that which abroad thou shalt often loose. The Cell, if thou continue in it, waxeth sweet, and if thou loue not to stay in it, it becometh irksome. If in the beginning of thy conuersion thou accustome thy selfe to remaine in it, and keepe it well, it wilbe afterwards vnto thee a deare friend, and a most plea-

Psal. 4.

fant comfort.

PL 6.

6. In silence and quietnes a deuout soule perfecteth her selfe, and learneth the secrets of holy Scriptures. There she findeth floods of teares, with which she may every night wash and cleanse her selfe, & be made so much the more familiar with her Creator, by how much the further off she liueth from al worldly disquiet. Who so therefore withdraweth himselfe from his acquaintance & friends; God with his holy Angels will draw neere vnto him. It were better for a man to ly hidden, and haue care of himselfe, then being carelesse of his soule, to worke miracles in the world. It is comendable for a Religious person to go abroad seldome, to fly to be seene, and to be vnwilling to see men.

7. Why wilt thou see that which is not lawfull for thee to haue. The world passeth away, and all his delights. The desires of our sensuality, draw vs to walke abroad, but when the houre is past, what bringest thou home, but a burdened conscience, and distracted thoughts? A ioyfull

going abroad, bringeth often a sorrowfull coming home; and a merry evening makes a sad morning. So all carnall ioy entreth gently, but in the end it causeth remorse and destruction. What is elsewhere to be seene, which thou canst not see heere? Heere thou seest heauen and earth, and all the elements, of which all other things are made.

Prou. 14.

Eccles. 1.

3. What is there any where to be seene that can long continue vnder the sunne? Thou thinkest perhaps to satiate thy selfe, & haue thy fill; but thou shalt neuer attaine it. If it were possible for thee to see all things created, present before thine eyes, what were it all but a vaine and vnprofitable sight? Lift vp thine eyes to God in heauen, & aske pardon of thy sinnes and negligences. Leauē vaine things to the vaine. Attend thou to that which God commandeth. Shut thy dore vpon thee, and call vpon Iesus thy beloued. Be thou with him in thy Cell, for thou shalt not find so great peace in any other place. If thou hadst staid within and not giuen eare to idle

Eccles. 3.

Ps. 122.

Matt. 6.

newes, thou haddest kept thy selfe better in good peace. But now that thou delightest sometimes to heare nouelties, it is fit thou sufferest for it some trouble and disquiet of mind.

CHAP. XXI.

Of Compunction of hart.

PROV. 19.

IF thou wilt profit any thing, keep thy selfe alwaies in the feare of God, and yield not too much scope to liberty. Containe all thy senses vnder the rule of discipline, and giue not thy selfe to foolish mirth. Giue thy selfe to cōpunction of hart, and thou shalt find deuotion. Compunction discouereth much good, which with too much liberty is quickly lost. It is meruaile that a man can euer perfectly reioyce in this life, if he consider his banishment, and weigh the many perils, wherwith his soule is inuironed. The leuity of our minds, & the little care we haue of our faults, makes vs not to feele the sorrowes of our soule.

2. But oftentimes we vainely
laugh

laugh, when we haue iust cause to weep. There is neither true liberty, nor good mirth, but that which is in the feare of God, accompanied with a good conscience. Happy is he, that can auoyd all cause of distraction, and draw himselfe to the vnion of holy compunction. Happy is he, that can abandon all that may defile, or burden his conscience. Fight manfully: one custome ouercomes another. If thou canst forbear to intermeddle with that which belongs to others; they will not hinder thee in that which thou hast to do.

3. Busy not thy selfe in matters which appertaine to others: neither do thou meddle at all with the affaires of thy betters. Looke first of all to thy selfe, and haue a more especiall care to admonish thy selfe, then whomsoever thou louest best. If thou hast not the fauour of men, be not therefore grieued: but let this seeme vnto thee a most iust cause of griefe, that thou lookest not to thy self with that care, which becometh the seruant of God, and a deuout religious person. It is oftentimes bet-

Gal. 1.

Ps. 76.

ter and more secure, that a man hath not many consolations in this life, especially such, as are agreeable to the inclination of our corrupt nature. But that we haue none at all, or do seldom taste diuine comforts, the fault is ours, that do not seeke for compunction of hart, nor do wholly forsake the vaine comforts of this world.

Iudic. 2.
& 20.
2. Reg. 13.

4. Acknowledge thy selfe vnworthy of diuine comforts, and that thou hast deserved great tribulation. When a man hath perfect contrition, then is the whole world grievous & loathsom vnto him. A good man findeth alwaies sufficient cause of teares and sorrow; for whether he consider himselfe, or weigh the estate of his neighbour, he knoweth that none liueth here without tribulation. And how much the more thoroughly he considereth himselfe; so much the more is his sorrow. Our sinnes and vices in which we are so plunged, that we can seldom contemplate the things of heauen, do minister vnto vs matter of most iust sorrow and hartie contrition.

5. If thou didst thinke more diligently of thy death, then of liuing long, thou wouldest without doubt be more carefull in the amēdment of thy life. And if thou wouldest consider within thy selfe, the paines of hell, or of purgatory, I am perswaded it would moue thee to endure any labour or paine wharsoeuer in this world, and not to seare any kind of austerity. But because these things enter not to the hart, and we still loue that which delighteth vs, therefore we remaine could and void of spirituall vigour.

Eccles. 7.

Matt. 25.

6. Oftentimes our want of spirit is the cause, that our wretched bodies do so quickly cōplaine. Pray therefore with all humility to our Lord, that he will vouchsafe to giue thee the spirit of contrition, and say with the Prophet: Feed me, o Lord, with the bread of teares, and giue me to drinke with teares in measure.

Ps. 79.

CHAP. XXII.

*Of the consideration of humane
misery.*

Eccls. 7.

MISERABLE thou art where-
soever thou be, & whither-
soever thou turnest, if thou turrest
not thy selfe to God. Why art thou
troubled when things succeed not as
thou wouldest, and desirest? Who
is there that hath all things as he
will? Neither I, nor thou, nor any
man vpon earth. There is not any
man in this world without some tri-
bulation or affliction, though he be a
King, ora Pope. Who thinkest thou
thē is in best case? I ruly he that wil-
lingly suffereth something for God.

Luc. 12.

2. Many weak & feeble men say:
Behould how well such a one liues,
how rich, how powerful, how beau-
tifull, how great a man he is: but lift
vp thine eyes to the riches of heauē,
and thou shalt see that all temporall
prosperity is as nothing, full of vn-
certainty, and which rather oppres-
seth then otherwise: for it is neuer

had

had without solicitude and feare. The felicity of man consisteth not in hauing aboundance of temporall riches: a meane sufficeth. It is truly misery inough to liue vpon earth. How much more a man desireth to be spirituall, so much the more distastfull is this present life vnto him: for he better perceaueth, and seeth more cleerly the defects of human corruption. To eate, to drinke, to watch, to sleepe, to labour, to repose, and to be subiect to all other necessities of nature, is doubtlesse a great misery to a deuout mind, that would gladly be free & deliuered from all sinne.

3. The inward man is much oppressed with these corporall necessities, whilst he is in this world. And therfore the holy Prophet prayeth with great deuotion to be deliuered from them, saying: Deliuer me, O Lord, from my necessities. But wo be to them that know not their misery, & much more to thē that loue this miserable, & corruptible life. For some there be so dotingly affected vnto it, that although with la-

Prou. 19.
Iob. 14.

Eccl. 2.

Psal. 24.

hour and begging, they scarce get bread to eat, yer if they might liue heer alwaies, they would care but little for the kingdome of heauen.

Rom. 9.

1. Pet. 1.
Heb. 11.

Rom. 13.

4. O senslesse creatures and infidels in hart, who ly buried so deep in earth, that they haue no tast nor feeling, but of sensuall things! But miserable wretches, they shall in the end feele, to their cost, how vile, & of no esteeme was that which they loued. The Saints of God & the deuout Seruants and friends of Christ respected little what pleased their naturall inclinations, or what flourished in this life; but with their whole hopes & intentiōs they sought after the riches of heauen. Their whole desire was carried vp to those euerlasting treasures, which are inuisible; least they might haue byn drawne to base affectiōs, by the loue of visible things. Loose not thy hope to profit in spirituall matters: there is yet time & the houre is not yet past.

5. Why wilt thou deferre thy good purpose? Rise vp in this very instant, and begin, and say: Now is the time to worke, the time to

fight

fight: now is it a fit time to amend my selfe. When any tribulation, or affliction doth befall thee, then is the time to merit. Thou must passe through fire and water before thou come to rest. Vnlesse thou vse violence to thy selfe, thou shalt not ouercome thy euill inclinations. As long as we carry about with vs this frayle body of ours, we can neuer be without sinne, nor liue without tediousnes and grieve. We would gladly enioy quietnes, and be deliuered from al misery; but for that we haue by sinne lost our innocency, we haue togeather with it lost also our happines. And therefore it behoueth vs to haue patience, & to expect the mercy of God till this iniquity haue an end, and that which is mortall be swallowed vp of life.

6. O, how great is the frailty of man alwaies inclined to euill! To day thou confessest thy sinnes, and to morrow thou committest againe the same which thou didst confesse. Now thou purpolest to take heed, and within an houre thou dost as if thou hadst made no purpose at all.

Psal. 65.

Rom. 7.
Gen. .3

2. Cor. 5.

Gen. 6.

We

2. Mach.
9.

We may therefore with great reason humble our selues, and neuer admit any thought of our owne esteeme, being so weak as we are, and subiect to euery change. Full soone (God knowes) is that lost by negligence, which with much labour was hardly gotten by grace.

7. What will become of vs in the end, that do so timely begin to wax could? Wo be vnto vs, if we will now giue our selues to ease, as if all were already in peace and security; when as yet there scarce appeareth so much as any signe of true sanctity in our conuersation. It were needfull that we were taught good manners againe like Children, if so perhaps there might be some more hope of our amendment, and profit in spirit.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of the consideration of death.

THE houre of death will quickly cuertake thee, and therefore look how thou liuest. To day a man

is

is liuing, and to morrow he doth not appeare; and being once out of sight, he is also quickly out of mind. O dulnesse and hardnesse of mans hart, who thinketh only on that he seeth, and foreseeth not that which is to come! Thou shouldest alwaies so order thy thoughts and actions, as if this very day thou wert to depart this life. If thou hadst a good conscience, thou wouldest not much feare death. It is better to auoyd sin then to fly death. If thou be not prepared to day; how wilt thou be prepared to morrow? To morrow-day is vncertaine, and whether thou shalt see it or no, thou knowest not.

2. What doth it auaille vs to liue long, when we do so little amend? A long life doth not alwaies make vs better, nay rather it oftentimes heapeth vpon vs a greater load of sinnes. O that we had spent one day well in this world! Many do reckon the yeares of their conuersion, but full slender oftentimes is the fruit of amendment. If it be a dreadful thing to dye, perhaps it will be more dāgerous for thee to liue long.

Bles-

Iob. 9.

&c 14

Luc. 12.

Heb. 9.

Matt. 25.

Luc. 12.

Sap. 4.

Matt. 24.

&c 25.

62 THE FOLLOWING

Ecclef. 7.

Blessed is he, that hath alwaies before his eyes the houre of his death; and disposeth himselfe dayly ther unto. If thou hast at any time seene a man dye, thinke with thy selte, that thou must one day passe the same way.

Heb. 9.

Luc. 21.

Matt. 24.
Luc. 12.

3. When it is morning, think that perhaps thou shalt not liue vntill night; and when euening comes, do not dare to promise vnto thy self the next morning. Be alwaies ready and so order thy life, that death may neuer take thee vnprepared. Many dye suddainly: for the Sone of man will come, when we least thinke of it. When that last houre shall come, thou wilt begin to think farre otherwise of thy life, and much lament, that thou hast bene so slack and negligent.

4. O, how wise and happy is he, that now laboureth to be such in his life, as he wisheth to be found at the houre of his death! For the perfect contempt of the world, the seruent desire to profit in vertue, the loue of discipline, the labour of penance, the readinesse of obedience,

the

the forsaking of our selues, and the bearing patiently of all aduersitie for the loue of Christ, will giue great confidence of a happy end. Thou maist do much good whilest thou'art well; but when thou art sick, what thou wilt be able to do, I know not. Few do grow better, and amend themselves with sicknes; as also they that wander much abroad, seldome become holy.

5. Trust not vpon thy friends or neighbours; neither do thou put off to future time, the care of thy soules health: for thou shalt sooner be forgotten, then thou dost imagine. It is better now to prouide in time, and do some good before thou goest, then to trust in the help of others, when thou art gone. If thou hast no care of thy selfe now when thou hast time, who will be carefull for thee herafter? The time which now thou hast is very precious. Now are the daies of health. Now is the time acceptable. But alas, that thou spendest it so little to thy profit, in which thou mightest gaine eternall life! The time will come, when thou

wilt

Esa. 30.
& 31.
Hierem.
17. & 48.

Matt. 6.

64 THE FOLLOWING

wilt desire one day, or one houre to amend, and I cannot assure thee, that thou shalt obtaine it.

6. O my dearest brother, from how great danger maist thou deliuer thy selfe! From how great feare maist thou be freed, if thou dost now liue fearfull, and carefull of thy death! Labour to liue in such sort, that at the houre of death thou maist rather reioyce then feare. Learne now to dye to the world, that thou maist then begin to liue with Christ. Learne now to contemne all earthly things, that thou maist then freely go to Christ. Chastice now thy body with pennance, that thou maist then haue assured confidence.

1. Cor. 9.

7. Ah foole, why dost thou thinke thou shalt liue long, being not certaine of so much as one day! How many haue byn deceaued, and taken out of this world on a suddaine, when they least expected it? How often hast thou heard, how such a one was suddainely flaine, another was drowned, another falling from some high place brake his neck, another dyed at his meate,

Luc. 12.

ano-

another when he was playing: one came to his end by fire, another by sword, another by plague, another dyed by the hands of theeues? So as death is the end of all, and the life of man passeth away like a shadow.

8. Who will remember thee; and who will pray for thee after thy death? Do now beloued brother, do now what thou canst, for thou knowest not how soone thou shalt dye, nor what shall befall thee after thy death. Now whilst thou hast time, heape together eternall riches. Thinke on nothing, but on the health of thy soule. Haue care only on that which belongeth to God. Make the Saints of God thy friends by honouring them, and imitating their vertues, that when thou departest this life, they may receaue thee into their euerlasting dwellings.

9. Esteeme thy selfe as a pilgrime, and stranger vpon earth, and as one to whom the affaires of this world do nothing appertaine. Keep thy hart free, and listd vp to God: for thou hast not heere any perma-

Iob. 14.

Matt. 1.
Luc. 11.Gal. 6.
Luc. 16.
Heb. 11.

1. Pet. 2.

Heb. 13.

nent Citty. Send thither thy prayers dayly with sighes, and teares; that thy soule may deserue to passe with much happines to our Lord after death.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of Iudgment, and the punishment of sinne.

Heb. 10.

Iob. 9.

Luc. 16.

2. Cor. 6.

IN all things consider the end, and how thou wilt be able to stand before that seuerer Iudge, frō whom nothing can be hidden, and is not appeased with guifts, nor admitteth excuses, but iudgeth according to iustice. O most wretched and foolish sinner, that fearest sometimes the countenance of an angry man; what answer wilt thou make to God, to whome all thy wickednes is knowne? Why prouidest thou not for thy self against that rigorous day of iudgment, in which no man can be excused, or defended by another, but euery one will be burden inough to himselfe? Now thy pains are profitable, thy teares acceptable, thy

thy cries are heard, thy sorrow satisfieth for thy sinnes, and purgeth thy soule.

2. The patient man hath a great and healthfull purgatory, who receauing iniuries, grieueth more for the others malice, then for his owne wrongs; prayeth willingly for his aduersaries, and from his hart forgiueth their offences; delayeth not to aske forgiuenes of whomsoever he hath offended; is sooner moued to compassion then to anger; vseth often violence to himselfe; and laboureth with his whole force to subdue the flesh in all things to the spirit. It is better to purge our sins, and vices now, then to reserue them for purgatory. Verily the inordinate loue we beare to our selues deceaueth vs.

3. What other thing shall that fire feed on, but thy sinnes? How much the more thou sparest thy selfe now, and followest the desires of thy corrupt nature: so much the more grievously shalt thou be punished heerafter: and so much the more matter dost thou keep for that pur-

Iac. 1.

Luc. 23.

Act. 7.

ging fire. In the selfe same wherein a man hath sinned, shall he be more grievously punished. There shall the slouthfull be pricked forwardes, with burning goads. There shall the Gluttons be tormented with insatiable hunger and thirst. There shall the lasciuious and the louers of pleasures be couered ouer with burning pitch and brimston. The enuious like raging dogs, shall there howle for griefe.

4. There is no vice, that shall not haue his proper torment. The proud shall be full of all thame and confusion. The couetous shall be in miserable want. One houre of paine there shall be more sharpe, then a hundred yeares of most hard penance heer. There is no rest there, nor comfort for the damned. Heere yet sometimes our labours cease, & we enjoy the comfort of our friends. Be now solicitous & sorrowfull for thy sinnes; that in the day of iudgment thou maist be secure in the company of the blessed soules. For then shall the iust stand in great constancy, against those that afflicted & op-

pressed

Iob. 40.

Sap. 5.

pressed them. Then shall he stand to iudge, who now doth humbly submit himselfe to the iudgmēt of men. Then shall the poore and humble haue great confidence & the proud shall be compassed about on all sides with feare.

5. Then will it appeare, that he was wise in this world, who had heere learned to be as a foole and dispised for Christ. Then shall affliction patiently suffered delight vs, and iniquity shall stop her mouth. Then shall the deuout reioyce, and the irreligious mourne. Then shall the chastised flesh more flourish, then if it had byn alwaies nourished in delights. Then shall the poore garment shine, & the precious robes appeare contemptible. Then shall the meane cottage be more commended, then the sumptuous pallace. Then will constant patience more auaille vs, then all earthly power. Then will simple obedience be more esteemed, then all worldly wisdom.

6. Then shall a good and pure conscience yield vs more comfort, then the profound learning of Phi-

Fl. 106.

2. Cor 4.

E 1. 29.

lofophy. Then fhall the contempt of riches weigh more then all the worldlingtreafures. Then wilt thou be more comforted that thou haft praied deuoutly, then that thou haft faired daintily. Then wilt thou be more ioyful that thou haft obferued filēce, then that thou haft talked much. Then will good works appeare of much more eſteeme, the faire words. Then a ſtrict life and hard pennance will be more pleaſing, then all earthly delights. Accuſtome thy ſelf now to ſuffer a little, that thou maiſt then be deliuered from more grievous paines. Proue heere firſt what thou canſt endure heerafter. If now thou canſt beare ſo little, how wilt thou be able to endure everlaſting torments? If now a little ſuffering make thee ſo impatient, what will hell fire do heerafter? Aſſure thy ſelfe, thou canſt not haue two Paradifes. It is impoſſible for thee to enioy delights heere in this world, and raigne heerafter with Chriſt in heauen.

Luc. 12.

7. If thou haſt hitherto liued alwaies in honors and delights; what would it auaille thee, if thou ſhoul-

deſt

dest presently dy? All is vanity but to loue God, and only to serue him. And he that loueth God with his whole hart, needeth to feare neither death, punishment, iudgment, nor hell: for perfect loue gities secure ac-
 cesse to God. But he that delighteth alwaies in sinne, what wöder though he alwaies feare death, and be terrified with the thought of Iudgment. Yet it is good, that if loue be not of force to withhould thee from sinne, that at least the feare of hell may re-
 strayne thee. And he that layeth aside the feare of God, can neuer continue long in good state, but falleth quickly into the snares of the diuell.

Ecclef. 1.

Rom. 8.

CHAP. XXV.

*Of the seruent amendment of
 our whole life,*

BE watchfull and diligent in the seruice of God, and often think with thy selfe wherefore thou camest, and why thou didst leaue the world. Was it not that thou migh-

2. Tim. 4.

71 THE FOLLOWING

Matt. 5.
Apoc. 21.

Ecclef. 51.

Apoc 21.
& 22.
Matt. 25.

Rom. 5.

test liue to God, and become a spirituall man? Go on therefore with courage: thou shalt shortly receaue the reward of thy labours, and there shall be no more feare nor sorrow in the confines of thy habitation. Thou must labour heer a while: thou shalt afterwards haue great rest: yea everlasting ioy. If thou continuest faithfull and diligent in seruing of God, do not doubt but God will be faithfull and liberall in giuing thee reward. Thou oughtest to haue a good hope of getting the victory, but thou must not make thy selfe assured therof, least thou wax negligent, or be puffed vp with pride.

2. When one that was in great anxiety of mind, often wauering betweene feare and hope, did once, being oppressed with griefe, prostrate himselfe in a Church in prayer before an Altar, and sayd within himselfe: O, if I knew that I should yet perseuer! He presently heard as it were a voice from God, which said: What if thou diddest know it, what wouldst thou do? Do now what thou wouldest do then, & thou shalt

be

be secure. And being herewith comforted, & strengthened in mind, he committed himselfe wholly to the will of God, and that noysome anxiety ceased, neither had he any mind to search curiously any further, to know what should befall him; but rather laboured to vnderstand what was the perfect, and acceptable will of God, for the beginning & accomplishing of euery good worke.

Rom. 12.

Psal. 36.

3. Hope in our Lord, and do good, saith the Prophet, and inhabit the land, and thou shalt be fed in the riches therof. One thing there is that draweth many back from that spirituall good, and the diligent amendment of their liues: the horror of the difficulty, and the labour of the combat. But they aboue others profit most in vertue, that endeavour most to ouercome those things, which are grievous, and contrary vnto them. For there a man profiteth more, and deserueth greater grace, where he more ouercometh & mortifieth himselfe in spirit.

4. But all men haue not alike to ouercome and mortify: yet he

that is zealous and diligent, though he haue more passions, shall profit more in vertue, then another that is of a more temperate disposition, if he be lesse feruent in the pursuite of vertue. Two things chiefly help to our amendment, to wit, to withdraw our selues violently from that to which nature is viciously inclined; and to labour earnestly for that vertue, which we most want. Be careful also to auoid with great diligence, those things in thy selfe, which do most displeaseth thee in others.

5. Gather some profit to thy soule out of euery occasion, and whersoever thou be: so as if thou seest or hearest any good, stir vp thy selfe to the imitation therof. But if thou seest any thing worthy of reproofe, beware thou do not the same. And if at any time thou hast done it, labour quickly to amend it. As thine eye obserueth others, so art thou also noted againe by others. O, how sweet and comfortable a thing it is, to see the seruants of Christ feruent and deuout, endued with vertuous and decent manners!

And

And on the contrary, how pittifull and grieuous a thing it is, to see them that liue in a dissolute and disordered sort, not applying themselves to that, for which they were called! O, how great damage and great danger it is, to neglect the good purposes of their vocation, and to busy themselves in that which appertaineth not vnto them, nor is committed to their care!

6. Be mindfull of the purpose thou hast made, and haue alwaies before the eyes of thy soule, the picture of thy Sauour crucified. Thou hast good cause to be ashamed, looking vpon the life of Christ, seing thou hast so slackly endeauoured to conforme thy selfe vnto him, though thou hast walked a long time in the way of the seruice of God. A religious person that exerciseth himselfe seriously, and deuoutly in the most holy life, and passion of our Lord, shall there abundantly find whatsoeuer is necessary, and profitable for him; neither shall he need to seeke any thing elsewhere, but only in Iesus. O, if Iesus crucified

Ecclef. 3.

Gal. 2. &
6.

would

would come into our harts , how quickly and fully should we be instructed in all truth !

7. A feruent religious person taketh , and beareth all well that is commanded him : but he that is negligent and cold , hath tribulation vpon tribulation , and on all sides is afflicted : for he is void of inward consolation , & is forbidden to seek externall comforts . A religious person that liueth not according to discipline , is in great danger of the ruine of his soule . He that seeketh liberty and ease , shall euer liue in disquiet : for one thing or other will alwaies displease him .

8. How do so many other religious persons , who liue vnder the strict rule of Monasticall discipline ? They seldome go abroad , they liue retiredly , they feed meanly , they are cloathed courselly , they labour much , speak little , watch long , rise early , spend much time in prayer , read often , and keep themselues in all kind of discipline . Consider the Carthusians , Cistercians , and the Religious men and women of di-

ners Orders , how they rise euery night to sing praises vnto God . And how vnseemly then it is for thee to be slouthfull in so holy a worke , when as so great multitudes of religious persons do begin to glorify God .

9. O , that we had nothing els to do , but alwaies with our mouth , and whole hart to praise our Lord God ! O , that thou mightest neuer haue need to eate , nor drinke , nor sleepe , but mightest alwaies praise God , and only imploy thy selfe in the exercises of spirit : thou shouldst then be much more happy , then now thou art , when for so many necessities , thou art cōstrained to serue thy body . Would God these necessities were not at all , but only the spirituall refections of the soule , which (alas) we tast of too seldome .

10. When a man commeth to that estate , that he seeketh no comfort of any creature , then doth he begin to take perfect contentment & delight in God . Then shall he be contented with whatsoeuer doth befall

him

Rom. 11.

him in this world. Then shall he neither reioyce in great matters, nor be sorrowfull for small, but with great integrity and confidence commit himselfe to God; who shall be vnto him all in all: to whom nothing doth perish, nor dy, but all things do liue vnto him, and serue him at a beck without delay.

Eccles. 7.

11. Remember alwaies the

end, and how that time lost neuer returnes. Without care and diligence thou shalt neuer get vertues. If thou beginnest to wax could, it will be euill with thee: but if thou giue thy selfe to seruour of spirit; thou shalt find much peace, and feele lesse labour, through the assistance of Gods grace, and loue of vertue. The seruient and diligent man is ready, and prepared for all things. It is harder to resist vices and passions, then to toile in bodily labours. He that auoideth not small faults, by little and little falleth into greater. Thou wilt alwaies reioyce in the euening, if thou spend the day profitably. Be

Apoc. 3.

Eccl. 19.

watch-

watchfull ouer thy selfe , stir vp
thy selfe , warne thy selfe , and
whatsoever becomes of others, ne-
gleſt not thy selfe . The grea-
ter violence thou vseſt
againſt thy selfe , the
more thou shalt
profit .

*The end of the
first Booke .*

O F



OF THE
FOLLOWING
OF CHRIST.

THE SECOND BOOKE.

CHAP. I.

Of spiritnall conuersation.

Luc 7.

Ioel. 2.

Rom. 19.

THE kingdome of God
is within you, saith
our Lord. Turnethee
with thy whole hart
vnto our Lord, and
forsake this miserable
world, and thy soule shall find rest.
Learne to despise exteriour things,
& to giue thy self to the interiour, &
thou shalt perceau the kingdome of

God

God to come into thee For the kingdom of God is peace, and ioy in the holy Ghost, which is not giuen to the wicked. Christ will come vnto thee, and shew thee his diuine comfort, if thou prepare for him a worthy mansion within thee. All his glory and beauty is within, and there he pleaseth himselfe. The inward man he often visits, and hath with him sweet discourses, pleasant comfort, much peace, wonderfull familiarity.

Psal. 47.

2. O faithfull soule, make ready thy hart for this bridegrome, that he may vouchsafe to come vnto thee, and dwell within thee. For he saith: If any loue me, he wil keep my word, and we will come vnto him, and will make our aboad with him. Giue therefore vnto Christ a place in thy hart, and deny entrance to all others. When thou hast Christ, thou art rich, and he wil suffice thee. He will be thy faithfull and prouident helper in all things, so as thou shalt not need to trust in men. For men are soone changed, and quickly decay; but Christ remaineth for

Ioan. 14.

82 THE FOLLOWING

Ioan. 12.

euē, and standeth firmly vnto the end.

Hier. 17.

3. There is little trust to be put in a fraile and mortall man, though he be profitable and deare vnto thee: neither oughtest thou much to be grieued, if somtimes he crosse, and contradict thee. They that to day take thy part, to morrow may be against thee; and so on the contrary, they often turne like vnto the wind. Put all thy trust in God, and feare and loue him: He will answere for thee, and do in al things what is best. Thou hast not heere a dwelling City: and whersoever thou be, thou art a stranger and pilgrime: neither shalt thou euē haue rest, vlesse thou be perfectly vnited vnto Christ.

1. Pet. 5.
Heb. 13.

Phil. 3.

Sap. 5.

4. Why dost thou linger and make delaies heere, since this is not the place of thy rest? In heauē ought to be thy dwelling, and all earthly things are to be regarded as it were in the way. All things passe away, and thou togeather with them. Beware thou cleaue not vnto them, least thou be enthralled; and so dost

perish

perill. Let thy thought be on the highest, and thy prayer directed vnto Christ without ceasing. If thou canst not contemplate high and heavenly things, rest thy selfe in the passion of Christ, and dwell willingly in the wounds of his sacred body. For if thou fly deuoutly vnto his holy wounds, and to the precious markes of his passion, thou shalt feele great comfort in tribulation: neither wilt thou much care for being despised of men, and wilt easily beare the wordes of slanderous tongues

5. Christ was also in the world despised, and in great necessity: forsaken by his acquaintāce, & friends in the midst of slaunders. Christ would suffer, and be contemned: & darrest thou complaine? Christ had aduersaries and backbiters: and wilt thou haue all men thy friends & benefactors? For what shall thy patience be crowned, if no aduersity happen vnto thee? If thou wilt suffer no aduersity, how wilt thou be the friend of Christ? Suffer with Christ, & for Christ, if thou desire to raigne

Matt. 1.
12. 5. 26.
& Ioan.
15.

2. Tim.
21.

with Christ.

6. If thou haddest once perfectly entred into the hart of Iesus, and tasted a little of his burning loue: then wouldest thou not weigh thy owne commodity or discommodity, but wouldest rather reioyce at slaunders, when they should chance to be cast vpon thee: for the loue of Iesus maketh a man to despise himselfe. A louer of Iesus, & of truth, & a true spirituall person, and free from inordinate affections, can freely turne himselfe vnto God, and lift himselfe aboute himselfe in spirit, and with great ioy of his soule rest in God.

Esa. 54.

7. He that iudgeth of all things as they are, and not as they are said, and esteemed to be, is truly wise, and taught rather by God then men. He that can liue spiritually, & make small reckoning of outward things: neither requireth places, nor attendeth times for performing of deuout exercises. A spiritual mā quickly recollecteth himselfe: because he neuer yieldeth ouer himselfe wholly to outward things. He is not hindered by outward labour or busines,

which

which may be necessary for the time: but as things fall out, so he frameth himselfe vnto them. He that hath well ordered and disposed all things within, careth little for the vaine inuentions, and peruerse inclinations of men. So much is a man hindred and distracted, how much he draweth matters vnto himselfe.

8. If all went well with thee, and thou hadest thy hart well purged, all things would fall out to thy good and profit. But many things displease, and often trouble thee, because thou art not yet perfectly dead vnto thy selfe, nor free from the affection of earthly things. Nothing so defileth and intangleth the hart of man, as the impure loue to creatures. If thou refuse outward comfort; thou wilt be able to contemplate the things of heauen, and often receiue internall ioy.

Rom. 8.
& 1. Cor.
4.

CHAP. II.

Of humble submission.

Pl. 27.

RESPECT not much who is with thee, or who is against thee. Endeavour, and take care, that God may be for thee in every thing thou doest. Have a good conscience, and God will defend thee. For whom God will help, no malice of man can hurt. If thou canst hould thy peace and suffer, without doubt thou shalt see that our Lord wil help thee. He knoweth the time, and manner how to deliuer thee, and therefore thou oughtest to resign thy selfe vnto him. It belongs to God to help, and to deliuer from all shame. Oftentimes it is very profitable, for the better keeping of humility, that others know and reprehend our faults.

1. When a man humbleth himselfe for his faults, then he easily pacifieth others, and quickly satisfieth those that are offended with him. God protecteth and deliuereth the

hum-

humble: he loueth and comforteth the humble: vnto the humble man he inclineth himselfe: vnto the humble he giueth great grace; and after his humiliation, he raiseth him vnto glory. Vnto the humble he reuealeth his secrets, and sweetly draweth and inuiteth him vnto himself. The humble when he hath receaued confusion, is in peace, for that he resteth in God, and relieth not on the world. Do not thinke that thou hast profited any thing, vnlesse thou esteeme thy selfe inferiour to all.

Matt. 11.

CHAP. III.

Of a good and peaceable man.

FIRST keep thy selfe in peace, and then maist thou pacify others. A peaceable man doth more good, then he that is well learned. A passionate man turneth good into euill, and easily belieueth the worst. A good peaceable man turneth all things into good. He that is well in peace, is not suspicious of any. But

1. Cor. 15.

he that is discontented, & troubled, is tossed with diuers suspitions: he is nether quiet himself, nor suffereth others to be quiet. He often speaketh that which he ought not to speake; and omitteth that which were more expedient for him to do. He cōsidereth what others are bound to do; and neglecteth that which he is bound to himselfe. First therefore haue a carefull zeale ouer thy selfe, and then thou maist iustly shew thy selfe zealous of thy neighbours good.

2. Thou knowest well how to excuse and colour thine owne deeds, and thou wilt not receaue the excuses of others. It were more meet, that thou didest accuse thy self, and excusedst thy brother. If thou wilt be borne withall, beare also with another. Behould how farre off thou art as yet from true charity and humility, which knoweth not how to be angry with any, or to be moued with indignation, but only against himselfe. It is no great matter to conuerse with the good, and those that are of a gentle disposition, for that is naturally pleasing to all, and

euery

Matt. 7.

A& . 1.

Gal. 6.

1. Cor. 13.

1. 2. 3.

euery one willingly enioyeth peace, and loueth those best that agree with him. But to be able to liue peaceably with the vnquiet, & peruerse minds, or with the disorderly, or such as contradict vs, is a great grace, and very commendable.

3. Some there are, that keep themselves in peace, and are in peace also with others. And there are some, that neither are in peace themselves, nor suffer others to be in peace: they are troublesome to others, but alwaies more troublesome to themselves. And others there are that keep themselves in peace, and labour to bring others vnto peace. Our whole peace in this miserable life, consisteth rather in humble suffering, then in not feeling aduersities. He that can best tell how to suffer, will best keep himselfe in peace. He is a conquerour of himselfe, a Lord of the world, friend of Christ; and heyre of heauen.

CHAP. IIII.

*Of a pure mind and vpright
intention.*

VWITH two wings man is lifted vp from earthly vanities, that is, with simplicity, & purity. Simplicity ought to be in our intention. Purity in our affection. Simplicity fixeth the eyes of the soule in God. Purity apprehendeth and tasteth his sweetnes. No good action will hinder thee, if thou be inwardly free from inordinate affection. If thou intend and seek nothing els but the will of God, and the profit of thy neighbour, thou shalt enioy internall liberty. If thy hart were sincere and vpright, then euery creature would be vnto thee a looking-glasse of life, and a booke of holy doctrine. There is no creature so little and abiekt, that representeth not the goodnes of God.

2. If in thine owne hart thou wert good and pure, then thou wouldest be able to see and vnder-

stand

Rom. 1.
Prou. 3.

stand all things without any impediment. A pure hart penetrateth heauen, and pierceth the depth of hell. Such as euery one is inwardly: so he iudgeth outwardly. If there be ioy in the world, surely a man of a pure hart possesseth it. And if there be any where tribulation and affliction, an euill conscience feels it. As iron put into the fire leeseeth his rust, and becometh bright like fire: so he that wholly turning himselfe vnto God, becometh feruent, & is changed into a new man.

3. When one beginneth to wax cold: then he is afraid of a small labour, and willingly receaueth externall comfort. But when he once beginneth to ouercome himselfe perfectly, and to walke manfully in the way of God: then he esteemeth those things to be light, which before seemed grieuous vnto him.

CHAP. V.

*Of the consideration of ones
selfe.*

Matt. 7.

WE cannot trust much to our selues, for that grace oftentimes and vnderstanding is wanting. There is but little light in vs, and that which we haue, we quickly loose by our negligence. And oftentimes we do not perceauē our owne inward blindnes. We often do euil, and excuse it worse. We are sometimes moued with passion, and we thinke it to be zeale. We reprehend small things in others, and passe ouer greater matters in our selues. We quickly feele, and weigh what we suffer at the hands of others: but we mind not what others suffer from vs. He that doth well and deeply consider his owne works, will find little cause to iudge hardly of another.

Matt. 16.

2. A spirituall man preferreth the care of himselfe, before all other cares. And he that diligently atten-

deth

death vnto himselfe, doth seldome speake much of others. Thou wilt neuer be recollected and deuout, vnlesse thou passe ouer other mens matters with silence, and looke especially to thy selfe. If thou attend wholly vnto God and thy selfe, thou wilt be little moued with whatsoever thou seest abroad. Where art thou, when thou art not with thy selfe? And when thou hast runne ouer all, what hast thou profited, if thou doest neglect thy selfe? If thou desirest peace of mind and true vni-
on, thou must esteeme little of all earthly things, and looke only to thy selfe.

3. Thou shalt therefore profite much, if thou keepe thy selfe free from all temporall cares. Thou shalt hinder thy selfe greatly, if thou esteeme any thing of this world. Let nothing be great vnto thee, nothing high, nothing gratefull, nothing acceptable, but only God himselfe purely, or that which is for God. Esteeme all comfort vaine which thou receauest from any creature. A soule that loueth God, despiseth all things that

be

1. Cor. 4.

Gal. 1.

Eccles. 1.

be inferiour vnto God, God alone is
euerlasting, and of infinite greatnes,
filling all creatures: the comfort of
the soule, and the true ioy of the
hart.

CHAP. VI.

*Of the comfort of a good
Conscience.*

2. Cor. 1.

Sap. 17.

Luc. 12.
Esa. 27.

THE glory of a good man, is
the testimony of a good con-
science. Haue a good conscience, &
thou shalt euer haue ioy. A good
conscience is able to beare much, &
is cheerefull in aduersities. An euill
conscience is alwaies fearefull and
vnquiet. Thou shalt rest sweetly, if
thy hart doth not reprehend thee.
Do thou neuer reioyce, but when
thou hast done well. Sinners haue
neuer true mirth, nor feelee inward
peace: because there is no peace to
the impious, saith our Lord. And if
they should say: We are in peace,
no euill shall fall vpon vs, and who
shall dare to hurt vs? belieue them
not: for vpon a suddaine will arise

the

the wrath of God, and their deeds shall be turned into nothing, and their concepts shall perish.

2. To glory in tribulation is no hard thing for him that loueth. For to glory so, is to glory in the Crosse of our Lord. That glory is short, which is giuen and receaued from men. Sorrow alwaies accompanieth the glory of the world. The glory of the good is in their consciences, and not in the tongues of men. The gladnes of the iust is of God, and in God: and their ioy is of the truth. He that desireth true and euerlasting glory, careth not for that which passeth away with time. And he that seeketh temporall glory, or contemneth it not from his hart, shewes himselfe but little to esteeme of the glory of heauen. He enioyeth great tranquillity and peace of mind, that careth neither for the prayses, nor dispraises of men.

3. He will easily be content and pacified, whose conscience is pure. He is not the more holy, though thou commend him: nor the more abiect though thou dispraise him.

Rom. 8.

Gal. 6.

2. Cor. 1.

What

1. Reg. 16.

What thou art, that thou art: neither canst thou be truly sayd to be greater, then what thou art in the sight of God. If thou consider what thou art within thee, thou wilt not care what men say of thee. Man seeth in the face, but God looketh into the hart. Man considereth the deeds, but God weigheth the intentions. To do alwaies well, and to esteeme little of himselfe, is a token of an humble mind. To refuse to be comforted by any creature, is a signe of great purity, and inward confidence.

2. Cor 10.

4. He that seeketh no outward witnes for himselfe, doth shew that he hath wholly committed himselfe vnto God. For not he that commendeth himselfe, the same is approued (saith S. Paul) but whom God commendeth. To walke inwardly with God, and not to be possessed with any outward affection, is the state of an inward and spirituall man.

CHAP. VII.

*Of the loue of IESVS aboue
all things.*

BLESSED is he that vnderstandeth what it is to loue Iesus: and to despise himselfe for Iesus. Thou oughtest to leaue thy beloued, for thy beloued; for that Iesus will be beloued alone aboue all things. The loue of things created is deceitfull and vnconstant: the loue of Iesus is faithfull and constant. He that cleaueth vnto creaturs shal fall with that which is subiect to fall. He that imbraceth Iesus shall stand firmly for euer. Loue him, and keep him for thy friend, who when all go away, will not forsake thee, nor suffer thee to perish in the end. Thou must once be left of men whether thou wilt or no.

2. Liue and dye with Iesus; & commit thy selfe vnto his trust, who when all faile, can alone help thee. Thy beloued is of that nature, that he will none of that which appertai-

Ps. 116.

Deut. 6.

Matt. 22.

neth to others: but will haue thy hart alone, and sit like a King in his owne throne. If thou couldest purge thy selfe perfectly of all creatures, Iesus would willingly dwell with thee. Whatsoeuer thou puttest in men, out of Iesus, is all no better then lost. Trust not, nor rely vpon a reed full of wind: for that all flesh is as hay, and all the glory therof shall wither away as the flower of the field.

Esa. 4.

3. Thou shalt quickly be deceaued, if thou looke only to the outward shew of men. And if in them thou seekest thy comfort and profit: thou shalt often feelee losse. If thou seekest Iesus in all things, thou shalt surely finde Iesus. But if thou seekest thy selfe, thou shalt also finde thy selfe, but to thy owne harme. For man doth more hurt himselfe, if he seeke not Iesus, then the whole world, and all his aduersaries could annoy him.

CHAP. VIII.

*Of familiar conuersation with
IESVS.*

VHEN Iesus is present, all is well, and nothing seemeth difficult: but when Iesus is absent, euery thing is hard. When Iesus speaketh not inwardly vnto vs, our comfort is nothing worth: but if Iesus speake but one word, we feele much consolation. Did not Mary Magdalen presently rise from the place where she wept, when Martha said vnto her: Thy maister is heere, and calleth thee. Happy is the houre when Iesus calleth from teares to spirituall ioy. How dry and hard art thou without Iesus? How foolish and vaine, if thou desire any thing out of Iesus? Is not this a greater losse, then if thou shouldest loose the whole world?

2. What can the world profite thee without Iesus? To be without Iesus is a grieuous hell: and to be with Iesus is a sweete Paradise. If

Ioan. 11.

Matt. 16.

Rom. 8.

Matt. 13.

Luc. 12.

Prou. 3.

Gal. 6.

Iesus be with thee, no enemy can hurt thee. He that findeth Iesus, findeth a good treasure: yea a good above all goods. And he that leese Iesus leeseeth too much, and more then the whole world. He is most poore that liueth without Iesus: and he most rich that is well with Iesus.

3. It is a great skill to know how to conuerse with Iesus, and a great wisdom to know how to keep Iesus. Be humble, and peaceable, & Iesus will be with thee. Be deuout and quiet, and Iesus will stay with thee. Thou maist driue away Iesus & loose his grace, if thou giuest thy selfe to outward things. And if thou shouldest driue him from thee, and leese him, vnto whom wilt thou fly, and what friend wilt thou then seeke? Without a friend thou canst not well liue: and if Iesus be not above all a friend vnto thee; thou shalt be too too sorrowfull and desolate. Thou doest therefore foolishly, if thou doest trust or reioyce in any other. It is better for thee to haue all the world against thee, then Iesus

offen-

offended with thee. Amongst all things therefore that be deare vnto thee, let Iesus alone be thy chiefest beloued.

4. Loue all for Iesus, but Iesus for himselfe. Iesus Christ alone is especially to be beloued; who alone is found to be good, and faithfull aboue all friends. For him, & in him, let as well friends as foes be deare vnto thee: and all these are to be prayed for, that all may know and loue him. Neuer desire to be singularly commended or beloued, for that appertaineth only vnto God, who hath none like vnto himselfe. Neither do thou desire that the hart of any should be set on thee; nor do thou set thy hart on the loue of any: but let Iesus be in thee, and in euery vertuous and good man.

5. Be pure and free within, and intangle not thy hart with any creature. Thou oughtest to be as it were naked, & carry a pure hart to God, if thou wilt consider, and proue, & see how sweet our Lord is. And truly vnlesse thou be preuented, and drawne by his grace, thou shalt ne-

Matt. 5.

Luc. 6.

uer attaine to that happines, to forsake and cast away all, that thou alone maist be vnited to him alone. For when the grace of God commeth vnto a man, then he is strong, and nothing is hard vnto him. And whē it goeth away, he is poore & weake, and as it were left vnto the will of whomsoeuer will afflikt him. In this thou oughtest not to be deiected, nor despaire, but to resigne thy selfe with all indifferency vnto the will of God, and to beare all things that befall thee for the glory of Christ: for after winter followeth summer: after night commeth day, and after a tempest, faire weather.

CHAP. IX.

Of the want of all comfort.

IT is no great matter to despise humane comfort, when we haue diuine. It is much and very much, to be able to want both humane and diuine comfort: and for the honour and glory of God, to be willing to endure desolation of hart; and to

Phil. 2.

seeke

seeke himseife in nothing, nor to regard his owne merit. What great matter is it, if thou be cheerefull and deuout at the comming of heauenly grace? This houre is wished for of all men. He rideth easily whome the grace of God carrieth. And what meruaile, if he feele not his burden who is borne vp by the Almighty, and led by the greatest guide?

2. We are alwaies willing to haue something for our comfort: and a man doth hardly put off, and forsake himself. The holy martyr S. Laurence ouercame the world with his Prelate: because he despised whatsoeuer seemed delightfome in the world: and for the loue of Christ he patiently suffered the high Priest of God S. Syxtus to be taken from him, whome he most loued. He ouercame therefore the loue of man by the loue of the Creator: and he rather chose the diuine pleasure, then humane comfort. See thou also learne to forsake some necessary thing, and a beloued friend for the loue of God. Be not grieved when thou art forsaken by a friend,

knowing that we all at length must be separated one from another.

3. A man must fight long, and with a constant mind, before he get the victory, and be able to place his whole hart in God. When a man confideth in himselfe, he easily slideth vnto humane comforts. But a true loue of Christ, and a diligent follower of vertue, giueth not himselfe to such solace, nor seeketh sensible sweetnes: but rather forcible exercises, and to sustaine hard labours for Christ.

4. When therefore spirituall comfort is giuen thee from God, receaue it thankfully: but know that it is the gift of God, not any desert of thine. Be not puffed vp, ioy not too much, neither do thou presume vainely: but be rather the more humble for that grace, and more wary and fearefull in all thy actions: for that houre wil passe away and temptation will succeed. When consolation is taken from thee, despaire not presently: but with humility and patience attend the heauenly visitation: for God is able againe

to giue thee greater consolation. This is not new nor strange vnto them, that haue experience in the way of God : for in the great Saints and ancient Prophets, there was oftentimes such kind of alteration .

5. For which cause one when he had grace, said : I sayd in my plenty, I will not be moued euerlastingly . But when this was gone from him , he addeth what he found in himselfe , saying : Thou turnedst thy face from me , and I became troubled . Yet doth he not despaire in the midst of these changes , but more earnestly prayeth vnto our Lord, and saith : Vnto thee (o Lord) I will cry , and I will pray vnto my God . Lastly he receaueth the fruit of his prayer , and witnesseth that he was heard , saying : Our Lord hath heard me , and taken pittie on me : our Lord is become my helper . But wherein? Thou hast turned (saith he) my sorrow into ioy , and thou hast compassed me about with gladnes . If great Saints haue byn so dealt withall , we that are poore and weake ought not to despaire , if we

Psal. 29.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ioan. 3.

Iob. 7.

Luc. 9.

be sometimes feruent , and sometimes cold : for the spirit commeth and goeth , according to the good pleasure of his will For which cause blessed Iob saith : Thou vifitest him early in the morning , and suddainly thou prouest him .

6. Whereupon therefore can I hope , or wherin ought I to trust , but in the great mercy of God alone , and in the only hope of heavenly grace ? For whether I enioy the presence of good men , or deuout brethren , or faithfull friends , or holy bookes , or learned treatises , or sweet songs and hymnes : all these help little , and haue little fauour , when grace forsaketh me , and I remaine left in my owne pouerty . At such a tyme there is no better remedy then patience , and the resigning of my selfe vnto the will God .

7. I neuer found any so religious and deuout , that hath not had sometimes a withdrawing of grace , or felt not a decrease of seruour . There was neuer Saint so highly rapt , and illuminated , who first or last was not tempted . For he is not

worthy of the high contemplation of God, who hath not byn exercised with some tribulation for Gods sake. For temptation going before, is wont to be a signe of ensuing comfort. And vnto those that are proued by temptations, heavenly comfort is promised. He that shall ouercome, saith he, I will giue him to eate of the wood of life.

Apoc. 21.

8. But diuine comfort is giuen, that a man may be stronger to beare aduersities. There followeth also temptation, least we should wax proud of that good. The diuell sleepeeth not, neither is our flesh as yet dead: therefore cease not to prepare thy selfe to the battaile: for on thy right hand, and on thy left are enemies that neuer rest.

1. Pet. 5.

CHAP. X.

*Of thankesfulnesse for the Grace
of God.*

VVH Y seekest thou rest,
since thou art borne to
labour? Dispose thy self to patience,

Iob. 3.

Luc. 14.

rather then to comforts: and to the bearing of the Crosse, rather then to gladnes. What secular person is there, that would not willingly receaue spirituall ioy and comfort, if he could alwaies haue it? Spirituall comforts exceed all the delights of the world, and all the pleasures of the flesh. All worldly delights are either vaine, or vncleane: but spiritual delights are only pleasant and honest, produced by vertues, and infused by God into pure harts. But no man can alwaies enioy these diuine comforts, according to his desire: for the time of temptation it not long away.

Eccles. 1.

2. False freedome of mind, and great trust of our selues, is very contrary to heauenly visitation. God doth well in giuing grace: but man doth euill in not returning it againe wholly vnto God, with thankesgiuing. And therefore the gifts of grace cannot flow in vs, because we are vngratefull to the giuer: and returne them not wholly to the head-fountaine. For grace is euer due to him that is thankefull: and from the proud

proud shall be taken that which is wont to be giuen to the humble.

3. I desire not that consolation that taketh from me compunction: nor that contemplation which breedeth a haughty mind. For all that is high, is not holy: nor all that is sweet, good: nor euery desire, pure: nor euery thing that is deare vnto vs, is gratefull to God. I do willingly accept of that grace, wherby I may euer become more humble and fearefull, and be made more ready and able to forsake my selfe. He that is taught by the gift of grace, and by the scourge of the withdrawing therof; will not dare to attribute any good to himselfe: but will rather acknowledge himselfe poore, and naked. Giue vnto God that which is Gods; and ascribe vnto thy selfe that which is thine owne: that is, giue thanks vnto God for his grace, and acknowledge that nothing is to be attributed to thee, but only sinne, and the punishment due thereunto.

Matt. 22.

4. Content thy selfe, and desire alwaies the meanest and lowest things

110 THE FOLLOWING

Luc. 14.

Ioan. 5.

things, and the highest shall be giuen thee : for the highest stand not without the lowest . The highest Saints before God , are the least in their owne iudgments . And how much the more glorious , so much the humbler within theselues. Those that are full of truth , and heavenly glory , are not desirous of the vaine glory of this world . Those that are firmly settled and grounded in God , can no way be proud . And they that ascribe all vnto God , what good soeuer they haue receaued , seek not glory one of another : but would haue that glory which is from God alone : and desire aboue all things to praise God in himselfe , and in all the Saints , and alwaies tend vnto the same .

5. Be therefore gratefull for the least gift , and thou shalt be made worthy to receaue greater . Let the least be vnto thee also as the greatest : and the most contemptible as an especiall gift . If thou consider the worth of the giuer , no gift will seeme little , or of meane esteeme . For it is not little that is given by the soueraigne Maiesty of God . Yea if he

should

should give punishment and stripes, it ought to be gratefull, for that he doth it alwaies for our saluation, whatsoeuer he permitteth to happen vnto vs. He that desireth to keep the grace of God, let him be thankfull for the grace giuen, and patient for the taking away therof. Let him pray that it may returne. Let him be wary and humble, least he leese it.

CHAP. XI.

*How few the louers of the Crosse
of Christ are.*

IESVS hath now many louers of his heauenly kingdome, but few bearers of his Crosse. He hath many desirous of comfort, but few of tribulation. He findeth many companions of his table, but few of his abstinence. All desire to reioyce with him, few will suffer any thing for him, or with him. Many follow Iesus vnto the breaking of bread: but few to the drinking of the Chalice of his passion. Many reuerence his miracles, few follow the igno-

Luc. 9.
22.

miny

III THE FOLLOWING

miny of his Crosse. Many loue Iesus, as long as aduersities happen not. Many praise and blesse him, as long as they receaue any comfort from him. But if Iesus hide himself, and leaue them but a while, they fall either into complaint, or into too much deiection of mind.

2. But they that loue Iesus for Iesus, and not for some comfort of their owne, blesse him in all tribulation and anguish of hart, as well as in the greatest cōfort. And although he should neuer giue them comfort, they notwithstanding would euer prayse him, and alwaies giue him thanks.

Phil. 2.

3. O how powerfull is the pure loue of Iesus, which is mixed with no selfe-loue nor proper interest! Are they not all to be called hirelings that euer seeke comforts? Do they not shew themselues to be rather louers of themselues, then of Christ, that alwaies thinke of their commoditie & gaine? Where may one be found that will serue God, without looking for reward?

4. It is hard to find any one so

spirituall, that is free from the loue of all earthly things. For where is any that is indeed poore in spirit, and free from all affection of creatures? Far hence, and from the end of the world is his price. If a man should giue all his wealth, yet is it nothing. And if he should do great pennance, yet is it little. And if he should attaine to all knowledg, he is yet far off. And if he should haue great vertue, and very feruent deuotion, yet there is much wanting: to wit, one thing which is most necessary for him. What is that? That leauing all, he forsake himselfe, and go perfectly from himselfe, and retaine nothing of selfe-loue. And when he hath done al that he knoweth to be done, let him thinke that he hath done nothing.

5. Let him not weigh that much which might be much esteemed, but according to truth, let him asseuer himselfe to be an vnprofitable seruant, as our Sauour hath sayd: When you shall haue done al things that are commanded you, say: We are vnprofitable seruants. Then may

Prou. 31.

Matt. 16.

Luc. 17.

H

he

Psal. 24.

he be truly poore in spirit and naked, and say with the Prophet: I am alone and poore: yet no man richer, no man more powerfull, no man more free thē he that can leaue himselfe and all things, and put himselfe in the meanest and lowest place.

CHAP. XII.

Of the high way of the holy Crosse.

Matt. 16.

Matt. 15.

VNTO many seemeth hard this speach: Deny thy selfe, take vp thy Crosse, and follow Iesus. But it will be much harder to heare that last word: Get yee away from me, yee cursed into euerlasting fire. For they that now willingly heare and follow the word of the Crosse, shall not then feare to heare the sentence of euerlasting damnation. This signe of the Crosse shall be in heauen, when our Lord shall come to iudgment. Then all the seruants of the Crosse, who in their life time conformed themselues vnto Christ cru-

cified

cified, shal draw neer vnto our Lord with great confidence.

1. Why therfore fearest thou to take vp the Crosse, which leadeth thee to a kingdome? In the Crosse is health, in the Crosse is life, in the Crosse is protection against our enemies, in the Crosse is infusion of heavenly sweetnes, in the Crosse is strength of mind, in the Crosse is ioy of spirit, in the Crosse is the height of vertue, in the Crosse is the perfection of sanctity. There is nor health of the soule, nor hope of euerlasting life but in the Crosse. Take vp therfore thy Crosse and follow Iesus, & thou shalt go into life euerlasting. He is gone before, bearing his Crosse, and is dead for thee on the Crosse; that thou maiest also beare thy Crosse, & desire to dy on the Crosse, with him. For if thou dyest with him, thou shalt also liue with him. And if thou be his companion in payne, thou shalt be partaker with him also in glory.

Luc. 14.

Ioan. 19.

2. Cor. 1.

3. Behould in the Crosse al doth consist, and all lyeth in ending our life vpon it: for there is no other

way vnto life, and vnto true inward peace, but the way of the Holy Crosse, and of daily mortification. Go where thou wilt, seeke whatsoever thou wilt: thou shalt not find a higher way aboue, nor a safer way below, then the way of the holy Crosse. Dispose & order all things according to thy will, and iudgment: yet thou shalt euer find, that of necessity thou must suffer somewhat, either willingly or against thy will, so as thou shalt neuer fully auoide the Crosse. For either thou shalt feele payne in thy body, or in thy soule thou shalt suffer tribulation of spirit.

4. Sometimes thou shalt be forsaken of God, sometimes thou shalt be troubled by thy neighbours, & which is more, oftentimes thou shalt be irksome to thy selfe: neither canst thou be deliuered or eased by any remedy or comfort: but so long as pleaseth God, thou oughtest to beare it. For God will haue thee learne to suffer tribulation without comfort; and that thou submit thy selfe wholly to him, and become

more

more humble by tribulation. No man hath so lively a feeling of the passion of Christ, as he who hath chaunced to suffer the like. The Crosse therefore is alwayes ready, & euery where attendeth thee. Thou canst not escape it, whither soeuer thou flyest: for whersoeuer thou goest, thou carriest thy selfe with thee, and shalt euer finde thy selfe both aboue and below, without & within: which way soeuer thou doest turne thee, alwayes thou shalt finde the Crosse: and euery where of necessity thou must haue patience, if thou wilt haue inward peace, and deserue an euerlasting Crowne.

¶ Yf thou beare the Crosse willingly, it will beare thee, and lead thee to thy desired end: to wit, where there shalbe an end of suffering, though heere there shall not. Yf thou beare it vnwillingly, thou makest for thy selfe a new burthen, and increasest thy load, and yet notwithstanding thou must beare it. Yf thou cast away one Crosse, without doubt thou shalt find another, & that perhaps a more heauy.

Luc. 24.

6. Thinkest thou to escape that which no man could euer auoyd? Which of the Saintes in the world was without Crosses, and tribulations? Verily Iesus Christ our Lord was neuer one houre without paine of suffering, so long as he liued. Christ (saith he) ought to suffer, & rise againe from death, and so to enter into his glory: and how dost thou seek any other way, then this high way, which is the way of the holy Crosse?

Iob. 7.

7. The whole life of Christ was a Crosse and Martyrdome: and dost thou seeke rest and ioy? Thou art deceaued, thou art deceaued, if thou seekest any other thing, then to suffer tribulations: for this whole mortall life is full of miseries, and inuironed on euery side with Crosses. And how much the more one hath profited in spirit; so much the heauier Crosses he ostentynies findeth: for the lone he beareth to God increaseth the grieve which he endureth for his banishment.

8. But yet this man, though so many wayes afflicted, is not with-

out

out the remedy of spirituall consolation, for the great good which he perceaueth to grow vnto him by the bearing of his Crosse. For whilst he willingly putteth himselfe vnder it, all the burthen of tribulation is turned into the confidence of diuine comfort. And how much the more the flesh is wasted by affliction, so much the more is the spirit strengthened by inward grace. And somety nes he is so comforted with the desire of tribulation, and aduersity, for the loue of conforming himselfe to the Crosse of Christ, that he would not with at any time to be without sorrow and tribulation: because he belieueth, that so much the more gratefull he shall be vnto God, how much the more he can suffer for him. This is not a worke of humane vertue: but it is the grace of Christ, that can, and doth so much in fraile flesh: that what naturally it alwayes abhorreth and flyeth, that, by seruour of spirit, it taketh hould on and lo- ueth.

2. Cor. 11.
& 12.

9. It is not according to mans

2. Cor. 3.

inclination to beare the Crosse, to loue the Crosse, to chastice & subdue the body, to fly honors, to suffer contumelies with a ioyfull harte, to despise himselfe, and to wish to be despised, to beare all aduersities, and damages and to desire no prosperity in this world. If thou considerest thy selfe, thou shalt be able to performe no such matter of thy selfe. But if thou trustest in our Lord, strength shall be giuen thee from heauen, and the world & flesh shall be made subiect to thy command. Neither shalt thou feare thy enemy the Deuill, if thou bee armed with faith, and signed with the Crosse of Christ.

10. Resolue therefore with thy selfe, like a good and faithfull servant of Christ, to beare manfully the Crosse of thy Lord, who was crucified for thy loue. Prepare thy selfe to beare many aduersities and diuers kinds of troubles in this miserable life. for so it wil be with thee, wherfoeuer thou be: and so surely thou wilt finde it, wherfoeuer thou hide thy selfe. So it must be, and there is no

reme-

remedy, or meanes to auoide tribulation and sorrow, but to beare them. Drinke of the chalice of our Lord willingly, if thou wilt be his friend, and desirest to haue part with him. Leauethe desire of comforts to God: let him doe therein as shall best please him. Set thou thy hart vpon the suffering of tribulations, and account them the greatest comforts: for that the passions of this life are not condign to future glory, although thou alone couldest suffer them all.

Matt. 26.

Ioan. 28.

Rom. 8.

Gal. 6.

11. When thou shalt come to this estate, that tribulation shall seeme sweet, and pleasant vnto thee for Christ: then thou maist thinke it well with thee, for thou hast found a Paradise vpon earth. As long as it is grievous vnto thee to suffer, and that thou desirest to fly it; so long shalt thou be ill at ease: and the tribulation thou flyest will follow thee euery where.

12. Yf thou settest thy selfe to that thou oughtest, to wit, to suffer, and to dy to thy selfe, it will quickly be better with thee, and thou

1. Cor. 12.

Aq. 9.

Pl. 43.

shalt finde peace. Although thou shouldest haue bene rapt euen vnto the third heauen with Paul, thou art not for this assured, that thou shalt suffer no contradiction. I (saith Iesus) will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name. It resteth therefore, that thou suffer, if thou wilt loue Iesus, and perpetually serue him.

13. O, would to God, thou wert worthy to suffer something for Iesus! how great glory would it be vnto thee, what ioy to all the Saints of God, how great edification also to thy neighbour! For all do commend patience, though few desire to suffer. With great reason thou oughtest to be willing to suffer a little for Christ; since many suffer far greater things for the loue of the world.

14. Know for certaine that thou oughtest to lead a dying life. And how much the more every one dieth to himselfe; so much the more doth he begin to liue to God. No man is fit to attaine vnto heauenly

things

things, vnlesse he submit himselfe to the bearing of aduersities for Christ. Nothing is more gratefull vnto God, nothing more wholesome to thee in this world, then to suffer willingly for Christ. And if it were in thy choyce, thou shouldst rather wish to suffer aduersities for Christ, then to enioy the delight of many comforts: because by these meanesthou shouldest be more like vnto Christ, and more conformable to all the Saints. For our merit, and the perfection of our estate consisteth not in much sweetnes and comforts: but rather in suffering great afflictions and tribulations.

15. If there had been any better thing, and more profitable to the health of man then suffering, surely Christ would haue shewed it by word, and example. But he plainly exhorted all the disciples that followed him, and all that desire to follow him, to the bearing of the Crosse, and saith: If any man will come after me, let him deny himselfe and take vp his Crosse, and follow me. So as when we haue

LUC. 9.

read

24 THE FOLLOWING

Act. 14.

read and searched all, let this be
the last conclusion: That by ma-
ny tribulations we must enter in-
to the Kingdome of God.

The end of the second Booke.

O F



OF THE
FOLLOWING
OF CHRIST.

THE THIRD BOOKE.

CHAP. I.

*Of the inward speach of Christ vn-
to a faithfull soule.*

HWill heare what our
Lord God will speake
in me. Blessed is the
soule that heareth our
Lord speaking in her:
and receaueth from his mouth the
word of comfort. Blessed are those
eares that receaue the sound of the

diuine

Psal. 84.

1. Reg. 3.

Matt. 13.

diuine voice, and listen not to the whisperings of the world. Blessed indeed are those eares that harken not to the voice which soundeth outwardly, but vnto truth which teacheth inwardly. Blessed are the eies that being shut vp to outward things, are attentiuē to those things that are internall. Blessed are they that enter into the inward things, and indeauor to prepare themselues more and more by daily exercises to the attayning of heavenly secrets. Blessed be they that delight to attend to the seruice of God, & cast from them all impedimentes of this world.

Pl. 34.

Pl. 34.

2. Consider these things my soule, and shut vp the dores of thy sensuall desires that thou maist heare what thy lord God speaketh in thee. Thus saith thy beloued: I am thy safety, thy peace, and thy life. Keep thy selfe with me and thou shalt find peace. Forsake all transitory things and seeke those that be euēlasting. What are temporall things, but deaceauing snares? and what do all creatures auaille thee, if thou bee

for-

forfaken by the Creatour? Forfake therefore all earthly thinges and labour to please thy Creatour, and be faithfull vnto him, that thou maist attaine vnto true happines.

CHAP. II.

*That truth speaketh inwardely
without noyse of
VVordes.*

SPEAKE Lord, for thy seruant heareth. I am thy seruant, graunt me vnderstanding, that I may know thy testimonies. Stir vp my hart to heare the wordes of thy mouth. Let thy speech descend as the dew into my soule. The children of Israel in times past said vnto Moyses: Speake thou vnto vs, and we shall heare thee: Let not our Lord speake vnto vs, least perhaps we dye. Not so Lord, not so, I beseech thee. But rather with the Prophet Samuel, I humbly and earnestly intreat: speak Lord, for thy seruant heareth. Let

not

The Ser-
uant.

1. Reg. 3.
Pf. 118.

Exod. 20.

1. Reg. 3.

not Moyses speake vnto me, nor any of the Prophets; but thou rather speake, my Lord God, the inspirer, and enlightener of all the Prophets: for thou alone without them canst perfectly instruct me, but they without thee can profit nothing.

2. They can pronounce words, but they giue not spirit. They speake maruelous well, but if thou hould thy peace, they inflame not the hart. They deliuer the letters, but thou openest the sense. They bring forth mysteries, but thou disclovest the vnderstanding of sealed thinges. They declare thy commaundements, but thou helpest to fulfill them. They shew the way, but thou giuest strength to walke it. They worke only exteriorly, but thou instructest and enlightnest the hartes. They water outwardly, but thou giuest fruitfulness. They sound forth wordes, but thou giuest vnderstanding to the hearing.

3. Let not therefore Moyses speak vnto me, but thou my Lord God, the euerlasting truth: least perhaps I should dye, and become without

fruit,

fruit, if I be warned outwardly only and not inflamed within: least the word heard and not fulfilled, known and not loved, believed & not observed, should increase my iudgment. Speake therefore Lord for thy seruant heareth, for thou hast the words of euerlasting life. Speake vnto me to the comfort of my soule and to the amendment of my whole life: and to thy prayse and glory and euerlasting honor.

1. Reg. 3.

Ioan. 6.

CHAP. III.

That the wordes of God are to be heard with humility, and that many weigh them not.

S O N N E † heare my words, wordes of great comfort, excelling al the knowledg of the Philosophers and wise men of this world. My wordes are spirit and life, not to be waighed by the vnderstanding of man. They are not to be drawne to vaine liking, but to be heard with silence, and to be receaued with al

† Our Lord.

Ioan. 6.

* The
Seruant .
Psal. 93.

† Our
Lord .
Heb. 1.

Esa. 23.

humility and great affection. And I said: * Blessed is the man who thou shalt instruct, O Lord, and shalt teach thy law, that thou maist giue him quietnes from euill daies, and that he be not destroyed vpon earth.

2. I (saith our † Lord) haue taught the Prophets from the beginning, and cease not continually to speake to euery one: but many are deafe and giue no care to my speach. The greater number doe more willingly listen to the world, then to God: & follow sooner the desires of their flesh, then the will of God. The world promiseth temporall & small things, and is serued with great diligence: I promise most high and eternall things, and the hartes of men are nothing moued with it. Who is he that serueth and obeyeth me with equall care to that with which the world, & the Lords thereof are serued? Blush Sidon, saith the sea. And if thou aske the cause, heare wherefore. For a little prebend a long iorney is vndertaken: for everlasting life many will scarce once list

a foote from the ground. A thing of small value is sought after greedily: for a penny sometimes there is great contention: for a vaine thing and sleight promise, men doubt not to toile day and night.

3. But alas for an vnchangeable good, for an inestimable reward, for the highest honour and glory without end, they are loath to take the least paines. Blush therefore slouthfull and complaining seruant, that they are found more ready to distruction, then thou to life. They reioyce more at vanity, then thou at truth. And yet they are sometimes frustrated of their hope, but my promise deceaueth none, nor sendeth him away empty that trusteth in me. I will giue that which I haue promised. I will fulfill that which I haue said, but to him that remaines faithfull in my loue to the end. I am the reward of all good, and do try my deuout seruants in forcible proofes.

4. Write my words in thy hart, and thinke diligently of them: for they will be necessary in time of tē-

Rom. 1.
Matt. 24.

Apoc. 2

Matt. 5.
15.

pration. What thou vnderstandest not when thou readest, thou shalt know in the day of visitation. I am wont to visite my elect two seuerall waies, to wit, with temptation, and comfort. And I dayly read two lessons vnto them, one reprehending their vices, another exhorting them to the increase of vertues. He that hath my words & despiseth them, hath within himselfe that shall iudge him at the last day.

A prayer to implore the grace of deuotion.

* The
Seruant.

Gen. 18.

5. Lord * my God, thou art all that I can desire. Who am I, that dare speak vnto thee? I am thy poorest seruant, and a most vile worme: much more poore and contemptible then I can or dare expresse. Remember Lord, that I am nothing, haue nothing, and can do nothing. Thou alone art good, iust, and holy; thou canst do all things, performest all things, leauing only a sinner voide of all good. Call to mind thy mercies, and fill my hart with thy grace,

who

who wilt not that thy workes be voyd.

6. How can I support my selfe in this miserable life: vnlesse thy mercy and grace comfort me? Turne not thy face from me: delay not thy visitation; draw not away thy comfort, least my soule become as earth without water vnto thee. Lord teach me to fulfill thy will; teach me to liue worthily and humbly in thy sight; for thou art my wisdom, thou dost perfectly know me, and didest know me before the world was made, and before I was borne in the world.

Psal. 68.

Pf. 142.

CHAP. IIII.

*That we ought to liue in truth
and humility in the sight
of God.*

Sonne * walke in my sight in sincerity and truth; and euer seeke me in playnes of hart. He that walketh in my sight in truth, shall be defended from euill incursions, and truth shall deliuer him from se-

† Our
Lord.

Gen. 17.
Sap. 1.

1. Ioan 8.

* The
Seruant .† Our
Lord .

2. Cor. 4.

ducers , and from the detractions of the wicked . If truth shall haue deliuered thee , thou shalt be truly free , and shalt not care for vaine speaches of men . Lord * it is true . According as thou saist , so I beseech thee let it be done with me , and keepe me , & bring me to a happy end . Let thy truth teach me , and let it deliuer me from all euill affection and inordinat loue : and I shall walke with thee in great freedome of hart .

2. I † will teach thee (sayth the Truth) those things that are right & pleasing in my sight . Thinke of thy sinnes with great sorrow , and grief : & neuer esteeme thy selfe any thing for thy good works . Thou art in very deed a sinner , and subiect to many passions . Of thy selfe thou alwaies tendest to nothing , and art quickly cast downe and ouercome : quickly troubled , quickly dissolued . Thou hast nothing wherein thou canst glory . but many thinges for which thou oughtest to humble , and despise thy selfe : for thou art much weaker then thou art able to comprehend .

3. And

3. And therefore let nothing seeme much vnto thee whatsoeuer thou doest. Let nothing seem great, nothing precious, and wonderfull, nothing worthy of estimation: nothing high, nothing truly commendable and to be desired, but that which is euerlasting. Let the eternall Truth aboue all things please thee. Let thy owne great vnworthines alwaies displease thee. Feare nothing, blame, and fly nothing so much, as thy sinnes, and vices: which ought to displease more then the losse of any thing whatsoeuer. Some walk not sincerely in my sight, but led by a certaine curiosity, and pride, will know my secrets, and vnderstand the high mysteries of God, neglecting themselves and their owne saluation. These oftentimes (for that I resist them) do fall into great temptations & sinnes, for their pride and curiosity.

4. Feare the iudgments of God, dread the wrath of the almighty. But discusse not the works of the Highest. Search thine owne iniquities, in how much thou hast offended, and

Eccles. 3.
& 2. Cor.
3.

Esa. 29.

Pl. 24.

Pl. 1.

how much good thou hast neglected. Some carry their deuotion only in bookes, some in pictures, some in outward signes and figures, some haue me in their mouths, but little in their harts, There are others that being illuminated in their vnderstanding, and purged in their affection, do alwaies aspire with an earnest mind to everlasting happines: and are vnwilling to heare of the things of this world, and do serue the necessities of nature with griefe; and these perceauē what the spirit of truth speaketh in them. Because it teacheth them to despise earthly, and loue heavenly things: to neglect the world, and day and night to desire heauen.

CHAP. V.

Of the wonderfull effect of diuine grace.

* The
Seruant.

I praise * thee o heavenly Father,
Father of my lord Iesus Christ,
for that thou hast vouchsafed to re-

mem-

number me a poore and wretched creature. O Father of mercies and God of all comfort, thanks be vnto thee, who sometimes with thy comfort refreihest me vnworthy of all comfort. I euer blesse and glorify thee with thy only begotten Sonne, and the holy Gho't for all worlds. O God my lord, the holy loue of my soule, when thou shalt come into my hart, all that is within me will reioyce. Thou art my glorie and the exultation of my hart. Thou art my hope, and my refuge in the day of my tribulation.

2. Cor. 1.

Psal. 3.

Pl. 31.

2. But for that I am yet weake in loue, and imperfect in vertue, I haue need to be comforted by thee: visit me therefore often, and instruct me with thy holy discipline. Deliver me from euill passions, and heale my hart of all inordinate affections: that being cured within, and well purged, I may be made fit to loue, strong to suffer, and constant to perseuere.

3. Loue is a great matter, in very truth a great good: which alone maketh euery thing that is heauy

Matt. 11.

light; and beareth equally vnequall burthens. For it carrieth a burthen without a burthen, and maketh euery thing that is bitter sweet, and delightfome. The noble loue of Iesus enforceth man to worke great things, and styrreth him vp to desire allwaies the most perfect. Loue will be aloft, and not kept downe with any bale thinges. Loue will be free from all worldly affection, to the end his inward sight be not obscured, that he be not intangled with the desire of any transitory gaine, or troubled with the want therof. Nothing is sweeter then loue, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing more ample, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller nor better in heaven or in earth: for that loue hath his beginning from God, and cannot rest but in God aboue all creatures.

4. He that loveth, flyeth, runneth, and reioyceth, he is free and not held in. He giueth all for all, & hath all in all, for that he resteth in one Highest aboue all, from which all good floweth and proceedeth. He respecteth not the guists, but

turneth himselfe aboue all goods vnto the giuer . Loue oftentimes knoweth no measure, but inflameth aboue all measure. Loue feeleth no burthen, waieth no paines, desireth aboue it strength, complaineth not of impossibility, for that it thinketh all things lawfull, and possible . It is therfore able to vndertake all things, and performeth and bringeth many things to effect : wheras he that doth not loue, fainteth and can do nothing .

5 . Loue alwaies watcheth, and sleeping sleepeth not : being wearied is not tyred : straitned, is not pressed : frighted, is not troubled : but like a liuely flame, and burning torch, breaketh vpwards, and passeth through all with great security . If any one loueth, he knoweth what this voice crieth . A lowd cry in the eares of God, is the burning loue of the soule, which sayth : My God, my loue, thou art wholly mine, and I wholly thine .

6 . Enlarge me in loue, that my hart may tast how sweet it is to loue, and to be dissolued, and swimme in

Rom. 8.

thy

thy loue . Let me be possessed by loue , mounting above my selfe , with excessiue seruour , and admiration . Let me sing the song of loue , let me follow thee on high my beloved , let my soule faint in thy praises reioycing with loue . Let me loue thee more then my selfe , and not my selfe but for thee , and all in thee , that truly loue thee , as the law of loue commandeth which shineth in thee .

1. Cor. 13.

1. Cor. 10.

Ps. 2.

7 . Loue is swift , sincere , pious , sweet and delightfull : strong , patient , faithfull , prudent , suffering , full of courage , and neuer seeking it selfe . For where one seeketh himselfe , there he falleth from loue . Loue is circumspect , humble , and vpright : not remisse , not mutable , nor attending vnto vaine things : sober , chaste , constant , quiet , and guarded in all the senses . Loue is subiect , and obedient to Superiours , meane and abiect to it selfe , deuout and thankefull vnto God , trusting and hoping alwaies in him , euen then , when God imparteth no sweetnes vnto it : for without sorrow none li-

ueth

ueth in loue.

8. He that is not ready to suffer all things, and stand to the will of his beloued, is not worthy to be called a louer. A louer ought to embrace willingly all that is hard, and distastfull for his beloued; and not to turne away from him, for any contrary accidents.

CHAP. VI.

Of the prooue of a true Louer.

SONNE † thou art not yet a strong & prudent louer. Wherefore * Lord? Because † thou giuest ouer for a small aduersity, and too earnestly seekest comfort. A constant louer standeth firmly in temptations, & giueth not credit to the crafty persuasions of the enemy. As I please him in prosperity, so I am not vnpleasent to him in aduersity.

2. A prudent louer considereth not so much the gift of his louer, as the loue of the giuer. He rather esteemeth the good will, then the value, and placeth all gifts vnder his

belo-

Rom. 8.

† Our Lord.
* The Seruant.
† Our Lord.

Phil. 4.

beloued. A noble louer resteth not in the gift, but in me aboue any gift. All therfore is not left if somtimes thou hast lesse tast of me, and my Saints then thou wouldest. That good and sweet desire which thou somtimes feelest, is the effect of present grace, and a certaine tast of the heavenly Country: wheron thou must not rely too much, for it goeth and commeth. But to fight against euill motions of the mind which may happen vnto thee, and to despise the suggestion of the diuell, is a signe of vertue and great merit.

Matt. 4.

3. Let not therfore strange fancies forced into thee, of any matter whatsoever, trouble thee. Retaine a firme purpose and an vpright intention to God. Neither is it an illusion that sometimes thou art suddainly rapt on high, and presently returnest againe vnto the accustomed vanities of thy hart. For thou dost rather vnwillingly suffer them, then commit them: and as long as they displease thee, & thou struest against them, it is a merit, and no losse.

4. Know

4. Know that thy ancient enemy doth euer strue to hinder thy desire to good: and to diuert thee from all deuout exercise: to wit, frō the worshipping of Saints, from the deuout memory of my passion, frō the profitable remembrance of thy sinnes, from the guard of thine own hart, and from the firme purpose of profiting in vertue. He thrusteth many euill thoughts into thy mind, that he may cause a wearisomnes, & horreur in thee, to draw thee from deuout prayer and reading. Humble cofession is displeasing vnto him, and if he could, he would cause thee to cease from receauing the Sacrament of my Body. Trust him not, nor care for him, although he should often set snares of deceit to intrap thee. Charge him with it, when he suggesteth euill, and vncleane thoughts vnto thee: Say vnto him: Auant filthy spirit, bluth miserable wretch, thou art filthy that bringest such things into myne eares. A way from me wicked deceauer, thou shalt haue no part in me: but Iesus shal be with me as a strong warriour,

and

Matt. 4.
& 16.

and thou shalt remayne confounded .
 I had rather dye and vndergo any
 torment , then to consent vnto thee .
 Hould thy peace and be silent . I
 will heare thee no more , though
 thou shouldest worke me many
 troubles . My Lord is my light and
 saluation , whom shall I feare ? If
 whole armies should stand together
 against me , my hart shall not feare .
 Our Lord is my helper , and my Re-
 deemer .

Pf. 26 .

Pf. 26. &
 1. Tim. 6.

5. Fight like a good souldiar :
 and if thou sometimes fall through
 frailty , recouer greater forces then
 before , trusting in my more aboun-
 dant grace : and take great heed of
 vaine pleasing of thy selfe , and pride .
 This brings many into errour , and
 makes them sometimes fall into al-
 most incurable blindnes . Let the
 fall of the proud foolishly presu-
 ming of themleues , serue thee for a
 warning , and a perpetuall humili-
 ation .

CHAP. VII.

*That grace is to be hid vnder
the veile of humilitie.*

SONNE † it is more profitable, & safe for thee to hide the grace of deuotion, not to extoll thy selfe, nor to speake much, nor to esteeme much therof: but rather to despise thy selfe, and feare it, as giuen to one vnworthy therof. This affection is not to be cleaued vnto, which may be quickly changed into the contrary. Thinke when thou art in grace, how miserable and needy thou art wont to be without it? Neither doth therein only consist the profit of spirituall life, when thou hast the grace of comfort; but when thou humbly, resignedly, and patiently sufferest the withdrawing therof: so that thou be not then lesse diligent in the exercise of prayer, nor suffer thy selfe to passe ouer the rest of thy accustomed good works: but that thou willingly performe what lieth in thee, according as thou art able &

† Our
Lord.

vnderstandest to be fit: not neglecting thyself wholly for the drinesse, and trouble of mind, which thou feelest.

Hierem.
10. &
Rom. 9.

Esa. 14.

2. There are many that when it succeedeth not well with them, presently they become impatient or slouthful. The way of man is not alwaies in his power, but it belongeth to God, to giue, and to comfort when he will, how much he will, & whome he will, as it shall please him and no more. Some vnadvised persons haue ouerthrowne themselves for the greedy desire which they had of the grace of deuotion: attempting more then they were able to performe, not waighing the measure of their weaknes, but following rather the desire of their hart, then the iudgment of reason. And because they presumed on greater matters then was pleasing to God, they quickly lost their grace. They were made needy, and left in a deiected estate that built themselves nestes in heauen: to the end that being humbled, and impouerished, they may learne not to fly with their owne wings, but

to

to liue in hope vnder my fethers .
 They that are yet new , and vnac-
 quainted in the way of our Lord ,
 vnles they gouerne themselves by
 the counsaile of discreet persons ,
 may easily be deceaued and ouer-
 throwne .

3. And if they will rather follow
 their owne iudgment, then giue cre-
 dit to others that are experienced,
 their end will be dangerous, if they
 cannot be drawne from their owne
 concept . Seldome those that are
 wise in their owne opinion, suffer
 themselves humbly to be gouerned
 by others . A little knowledg with
 humilitie, and a slender vnderstan-
 ding, is better then great treasures of
 learning with a vaine selfe-liking . It
 is better for thee to haue lesse, then
 much of that wherof thou maist be
 proud . He doth not discreetly, that
 wholly giueth himself ouer to mirth,
 forgetting his former poverty, and
 the chaſt feare of God, which fea-
 reth to loose the grace which he hath
 obteyned . Neither is he vertuously
 wise, that in time of aduersity or a-
 ny tribulation whatsoeuer, yeil-

Psal. 15.
 & 16 .

deth to despairing thoughts, and thinketh and imagineth of me lesse confidently then he ought.

1. Thess. 5.

4. He that will be ouer secure in time of peace, shall be often found in time of warre too deiected and fearfull. If thou couldest alwaies continue humble, and lowly within thy selfe, and temper, & gouerne thy soule well, thou shouldest not so sone fall into danger and offence. It is good counsell, that when thou conceauest feruour of spirit, thou shouldest thinke what will become of thee, when that light shal leaue thee. And when that doth happen, remember the light may returne againe, which for thy instruction and my glory I haue withdrawne for a time.

Iob. 17.

5. Such prooffe is often more profitable, then if thou shouldest alwaies enioy prosperity according to thy desire. For merits are not to be waighed in a man by the number of visions and comforts which he hath, or by his knowledg in Scriptures, or by his being placed in high degree; but in that he is grounded in

true

true humility, and replenished with diuine charity: if he alwaies purely & entirely seeke the honour of God, if he esteeme himselfe nothing, and with a sincere hart despise himselfe, and reioyce more to be despised and humbled by others, then to be honoured.

Pl. 23.

CHAP. VIII.

*Of a meane conceipt of our selues
in the sight of God.*

SHAL * I speake vnto my Lord: sith I am dust and ashes? If I esteeme better of my selfe, behould thou standest against me, and my iniquities beare true witnes, neither can I speake against it. But if I abase and esteeme nothing of my selfe, & cast of all selfe-conceipt, and (as I am) accompt my selfe to be dust, thy grace will be fauourable vnto me, and thy light will be neere vnto my hart: and all estimation how little soeuer thalbe swallowed vp in the depth of my nothing, and perish euerlastingly. There thou shewest

* The
Seruant.

Gen. 18.

my selfe vnto me, what I am, what I haue byn, and whither I am come: for alas I am nothing, and I knew it not. And if I be left to my selfe, behold I become nothing, & a masse of infirmity. But if thou suddainly looke vpon me, I am presently made strong, and filled with new ioy. And it is a great meruaile, that I am so suddainly lifted vp, and so graciously imbraced by thee, that of myne owne waight alwaies sinke downward.

2. Thy loue is cause heereof, freely preuenting me, and releeuing me in so many necessities, preserving me also from grieuous dangers, and (as I may truely say) deliuering me from innumerable euills. For surely by euill louing my selfe, I lost my selfe: and by seeking thee alone, & sincerely louing thee, I haue found both my selfe and thee, and for thy loue haue more deeply brought my selfe to nothing. For that thou, o most sweet Iesu, dealest with me aboue all desert, and aboue all that I dare hope and request.

3. Blessed be thou my God: for

al-

although I be vnworthy of all good,
yet the noblenes of thy bounty and
thy infinite goodnes, neuer ceaseth
to do good euen to the vngratefull,
and to them that be turned away far
frō thee. Turne vs vnto thee o Lord,
that we may be gratefull, humble,
and deuout: for thou art our safety,
our power, and our strength.

Matt. 5.

CHAP. IX.

*That all things are to be referred
vnto God, as vnto the
last end.*

SONNE † I ought to be thy chie-
fest and last end, if thou desire
to be truly blessed. With this inten-
tion thy affection shall be purified
which is oftentimes inclined inordi-
nately to it selfe, and vnto creatures.
For if in any thing thou seeke thy
selfe, thou presently faintest and
driest vp within thy self Direct ther-
fore all things chiefly vnto me, for
I am he that haue giuen all. Consi-
der euery thing as flowing from the
highest good: and therefore all things

† Our
Lord.

Eccles. 1.

are to be reduced vnto me, as vnto their first beginning.

Ioan. 4.

1. Cor. 1.

1. Cor. 4.

2. Out of me, as out of liuing fountaines, the litle and the great, the poore & the rich, do draw the water of life: and they that willingly, and freely serue me, shall receaue grace for grace. But he that will glory out of me, or be delighted in any particular good, shall not be grounded in true ioy, nor enlarged in his hart, but shall be many waies hindred and straitned. Thou oughtest therefore to ascribe no good vnto thy selfe, nor attribute the praise of vertue vnto any man: but giue all vnto God, without w home man hath nothing. I haue bestowed all, and will that all be returned to me againe: and with great seuerity I require thanks

3. This is the truth that putteth to flight vaine-glory. And if heauenly grace, and true charity enter in, there shall be no enuy nor grudging of hart, neither shall there be any place for selfe loue. For diuine charity ouercommeth all, & enlargeth all the forces of the soule. If thou vnderstand aright, in me alone thou

wilt

wilt reioyce, in me alone thou wilt hope: for none is good, but God alone, who is to be praised about all things, and to be blessed in all.

CHAP. X.

*That despising the world, it is
sweet to serue God.*

NOVV * I will speake againe Lord, and will not be silent. I will say in the eares of my God, my Lord, and my King that is on high: O how great is the multitude of thy sweetnes Lord, which thou hast hidden for those that feare thee! But what art thou to them that loue thee? What to them that serue thee with their whole hart? Truly vn-speakable is the sweetnes of thy contemplation, which thou bestowest on them that loue thee. In this chiefly thou hast shewed me the sweetnes of thy charity, for that when I was not, thou madest me: and when I went astray far off from thee, thou broughtest me back againe, that I might serue thee: and hast comman-

Matt. 19.
& Luc. 18.

* The
Seruant.

Pf. 30.

Gen. 1.

Pf. 119. &
Matt. 15.

ded me to loue thee.

Psal. 115.

Judic. 16.

1. Cor. 4.

2. O fountaine of everlasting loue, what shall I say of thee? How can I forget thee, that hast vouchsafed to remember me, euen when I withered away and perished! Thou hast vsed mercy with thy seruant beyond all the expectation of my hart: and hast bestowed thy grace and friendship beyond all merit. What shall I returne vnto thee for this grace? For it is not graunted to every one to forsake all things, to renoūce the world, and to vnderrake a life of religion and perfection. Is it much that I serue thee, whome all creatures are bound to serue? It ought not to seeme much vnto me to serue thee: but this rather seemeth much, and meruailous vnto me, that thou vouchsafest to receaue into thy seruice one so poore and vnworthy, & to ioyne him with thy beloued seruants.

3. Behould all is thine which I haue, and wherby I serue thee. And yet in very deed thou rather seruest me then I thee. Behould heauen & earth, which thou hast created for

the

the seruice of man are ready at hand, and do daily performe whatsoeuer thou dost command; and this is little: yea thou hast also appointed the Angels to the seruice of man. But that which exceedeth all, is that thou thy selfe hast vouchsafed to serue man, and promised to giue thy selfe vnto him.

Ps. 90. 8.
Hcb. 1.

4. What shall I giue thee for all these thousands of benefits? I would I could serue thee al the daies of my life! I would I were able at least for one day to do thee some worthy & acceptable seruice! Thou art truly worthy of all seruice, of all honour & euerlasting praise. Thou art my Lord, and I thy poore seruant, that am bound to serue thee with all my forces, neither ought I euer to cease to praise thee. And this I wil to do, this I desire: and whatsoeuer is wanting vnto me, vouchsafe I beseech thee to supply.

5. It is a great honour, a very great glory to serue thee, and to despise al things for thee. For great grace shall be giuen to them that willingly submit themselues vnto thy

most

Matt. 19.

Matt. 7.

Matt. 11.
& 1. Io. 5.

most holy seruice. They shal receaue most sweet comfort of the holy Ghost, that for thy loue shall renounce all carnall delights. They shall attaine great freedome of mind, that for thy names sake shall enter into the narrow way, and shall haue left off all care of this world.

6. O sweet and delightfull seruitude of God, by which man is truly made free and holy! O sacred state of religious bondage, which maketh man equall to Angels, pleasing to God, terrible to diuels, and gratefull, and of great esteeme to all the faithfull! O seruice to be imbraced, & alwaies wished for, by which we obtaine the greatest good, and attaine to that ioy which neuer shall haue end!

CHAP. XI.

*That the desires of our hearts
are to be examined &
moderated.*

† Our
Lord.

SONNE † thou oughtest to learne
many things more, which thou
hast

hast not yet well learned. * What are those Lord? That † thou frame thy desire wholly according to my pleasure: and be not a louer of thy selfe, but a diligent follower of my will. Thy desires oftentimes do stir thee vp, and drine thee forwards with violence: but consider whether thou art moued rather for my honour, then for thine owne profit. If I be the caule, thou wilt be wel content with whatsoeuer I shall ordaine: but if there lurke in thee any selfe inclination, behould this is it that hindreth thee, and waygheth thee downe.

2. Beware therefore thou incline not too much vpon any desire that commeth to thy mind, before thou aske my counsaile: least perhaps afterwards it repent thee, and that thou beginne now to dislike that which before did please thee, and which thou earnestly desiredst as the best. For euery affection that seemeth good, is not presently to be followed: noreuery contrary affection at the first to be fled. It is expedient sometimes to vse a restraint euen in

good

* The
Seruant.
† Our
Lord.

Phil. 2.

good desires & endeauours: least by importunity thou incur distraction of mind, and by euill exâple become a scandall vnto others: or being gain-
said by others, thou be suddainly troubled and fall.

Phil. 3.

Rom. 8.
& 2. Cor.
4.

2. Cor. 10.

1. Cor. 9.

3. Yet sometimes thou oughtest to vse violence, and resist manfully thy sensuall appetites, and respect not what thy body would, or would not: but rather to labour, that euen perforce it be subiect to the spirit. And it is to be chastised so long, and to be forced vnder seruitude, vntil it readily obey in all things, and learne to be content with a litle, and to be pleased with ordinary things, and not to murmur against any incon-
uenience.

CHAP. XII.

*Of the effect of Patience, and
of strife against Concupi-
scence.*

* The
Seruant.
Heb. 10.

LORD * God, I perceauē pati-
ence is very necessary vnto me:
for that many aduersities do hap-

pen

pen in this life. Howsoever I shall dispose of my peace, my life cannot be without warre & affliction. † So it is Sonne. And my will is not that thou seek after that peace which is voyd of temptations, or that feeleth no contrarieties: but then thinke that thou hast found peace, when thou art exercised with sundry tribulations, and tried in many aduersities.

20 If thou say that thou art not able to suffer much, how then wilt thou endure the fire of Purgatory? Of two evils the lesse is alwaies to be chosen. That thou maist therefore auoid euerlasting punishments in the next world, endeauour to suffer patiently for God the present evils of this. Doeſt thou thinke that men of this world suffer little or nothing? Thou art deceaued. Looke into the life euen of them that liue in greatest delicacies, and thou shalt find it otherwise. But thou wilt say they haue many delights, and follow their owne wills, and therefore they make small accompt of their tribulations. Be it so, that they haue whatsoeuer

they

Iob. 7.

† Our
Lord.

Iac. 1.

they will; but how long dost thou thinke it will last?

PC. 67.

3. Behould the wealthy of this world vanish away like smoke, and there shall be no memory of their ioyes past. Yea euen while they liue also, they rest not in them without grieffe, irksomnesse, and feare. For the selfesame thing in which they take their delight, is oftentimes the cause of sorrow vnto them & much affliction. They haue their desert, who for that they immoderately seeke, and follow delights, they do not obtain them, but with shame & sorrow.

4. O how short and deceiptful, how inordinate, and filthy are those pleasures! Yea so senseles and blind are men that they vnderstand it not: but like dumbe beasts, for a little pleasure of a corruptible life, they incur the eternall death of their soule. Do not thou therfore, my Sonne, follow the disordinate inclinations of thy corrupt nature, but forsake thine owne wil. Delight in our Lord, and he will giue thee the desires of thy hart.

Eccles. 12.
Pl. 36.

5. If

5. If thou desire true delight, and to be more plentifully comforted by me: behold, in the contempt of all worldly things, and in the cutting off of all base delights, shall be thy blessing, and abundant comfort shall be given thee. And how much the more thou withdrawest thy selfe from all comfort of creatures, so much the sweeter and more forcible consolations shalt thou find in me. But at first thou canst not attaine vnto them without a certaine grief, labour, and strife. The olde custome wil make resistance, & thou must ouercome it with another custome that is better. Thy flesh will murmur: but thou must bridle it with seruour of spirit. The old serpent will sting and trouble thee: but by prayer he shall be put to flight: & with profitable labour thou shalt shut the dore against him.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the humble obedience of a subject, according to the example of Christ.

† Our
Lord.

Matt. 16.

SONNE † he that endeauoureth to withdraw himselfe from obedience, withdraweth him selfe from grace. And he that seeketh to haue things in priuate, shall loose the common. He that doth not willingly and freely submit himselfe to his Superiour, it is a signe that his flesh is not yet perfectly obediēt vnto him, but oftentimes rebelleth and murmureth against him. Learne therefore readily to submit thy selfe to thy Superiour, if thou desirest to subdue thine owne passions. For the outward enemy is sooner ouercome, if the inward man be in good estate. There is no worse enemy, nor more troublesome to the soule, then thou vnto thy selfe, not agreeing well with the spirit. Thou must of necessity haue a true contempt of thy self, if thou wilt preuaile against flesh and
bloud

bloud.

2. Because thou louest thy selfe as yet too inordinatly, therfore thou art afraid to resigne thy selfe wholly to the will of others. But what great matter is it if thou that art dust, and nothing submittest thy selfe to a man for God: when I the Almighty and highest soueraigne, who created all things of nothing, humbly submitted my selfe vnto man for thee? I became the most humble and abiect of all men, that thou mightest ouercome thy pride with my humility. Learne to obey thou that art dust. Learne to humble thy selfe thou earth and clay, and put thy selfe vnder the feet of all men. Learne to breake thine owne will, and to yeild thy selfe to all subiection.

3. Take courage against thy selfe, and suffer not pride to liue in thee: but humble and submit thy selfe to all, that euery one may go ouer thee, and tread thee as dirt of the streets vnder their feete. Vaine man, what canst thou complaine of? what canst thou answere foule sinner to them that reprocue thee, who hast so of-

Luc. 2. &
Ioan. 12.

ten offended God, and so many times deserued hell? But mine eye hath spared thee, because thy soule was pretious in my sight: that thou mightest know my loue, and alwaies remaine gratefull for my benefits: that thou mightest continually giue thy selfe to true subiection and humility, and mightest beare patiently the contempt of thy selfe.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the secret Iudgments of God to be considered, least we be extolled in our good deeds.

* The
Seruant.

Iob. 15.

Iob. 4

Apoc. 8.

THOU * thundrest thy iudgements ouer me, Lord, and thakest all my bones with feare & trembling, and my soule is sore afraid. I stand astonishd, and consider: for that heauens are not pure in thy sight. If thou hast found wickednes in Angels, and hast not pardoned them, what shall become of me? Stars fell from heauen, & what do I presume that am dust? They whose workes seemed laudable, fell into the lowest:

est: and I haue seene them, that did eate bread of Angels, to be delighted with the huskes of swyne.

2. There is no sanctity, if thou o Lord, withdrawest thy hand. No wisdom availeth, if thou ceapest to gouerne. No strength helpeth, if thou leauest to defend. No chastity secure, if thou doest not protect it. No custody of our owne profitable, if thy sacred watchfullnes be not present. For if thou leauest vs, we sinke, and perish; but if thou vouchsafest to visit vs, we are raised vp, & do enioy life. We are inconstant, but by thee we are strengthened: we wax cold, but by thee we receaue heate.

3. O how meanely and basely ought I to think of my selfe! how little, yea nothing ought I to esteem it, if I seeme to haue any good! O Lord, how ought I to submit my selfe vnder thy vnsearchable Iudgments: where I find my selfe to be nothing els, but nothing, and nothing! O vnmeasurable waight! O sea that can neuer be passed ouer: where I find my selfe only and who-

ly nothing! Where then is the lurking hole of glory? Where is the confidence conceaued of vertue? All vayne glory is swallowed vp in the depth of thy Iudgments, which hang ouer my head.

Eccles. 23.
& Esa. 29.

4. What is all flesh in thy sight? Shall clay glory against him that frameth it? How can he be lifted vp with vaine words, whose hart is truly subiect to God? All the world cannot mooue him to any elation of mind, whome truth hath subiected vnto it, neither shall he be mooued with the tongues of all his prailers, that hath setled his whole hope in God. For they also that speake, be-hould, are nothing: they shall passe away with the sound of the words: but the truth of our Lord remaineth for euer.

Pf. 116.

CHAP. XV.

What we ought to do, and say in euery thing which we desire.

† Our
Lord.

SONNE? say thus in euery thing:
Lord if it be pleasing vnto thee,

let

let this be donne in this sort. Lord if it be to thy honour, let this be don in thy name. Lord if thou seest it expedient for me, and allowest it to be profitable, then graunt vnto me, that I may vse this vnto thine honour. But if thou knowest it will be hurtfull vnto me, and not profitable to the health of my soule, take from me all such desire. For euery desire proceedeth not from the holy Ghost, though it seeme vnto man right and good. It is hard to iudge whether a good spirit, or the contrary driue thee to desire this or that: or whether also by thine owne spirit thou be moued therunto. Many are deceaued in the end, who at the first seemed to be lead by a good spirit.

Iac. 3.

2. Alwaies therefore, whatsoever occurreth vnto thy mind to be desired, let it be desired with the feare of God, and with humility of hart: and aboue all thou oughtest to commit it vnto me with full resignation of thy selfe: and thou oughtest to say: Lord thou knowest what is best, do this, or that, as thou plea-

fest. Giue what thou wilt, and how much thou wilt, & when thou wilt. Do with me as thou knowest, and as best pleaseth thee, and is most for thy honour. Set me where thou wilt, and deale with me in all things according to thy will. I am in thy hand, turne me, and turne me againe which way soeuer thou please. Behould I am thy seruant, ready to obey thee in all things: for I desire not to liue vnto my selfe, but vnto thee: and would to God it might be in some worthy and perfect manner.

A prayer for the fullfilling of the will of God.

* The
Sergant.

Sap. 9.

3. Graunt * me thy grace sweet Iesus, that it may be with me, and labour with me, and perseuere with me vntill the end. Grant me alwaies to desire and will that which is most acceptable vnto thee, and best pleaseth thee. Let thy will be mine, and let my will euer follow thine, and agree perfectly with it. Let my will and nill be all one with thine: and not to be able to will, or refuse any thing

thing els, but what thou wilt, or reiectest.

4. Graunt that I may dye to all things that are in the world, and to loue for thy sake to be contemned, and not to be knowne in this world. Graunt that aboue all things that can be desired, I may rest in thee, and make my hart to enioy peace in thee. Thou art the true peace of the hart, thou art the only rest: out of thee all things are troublesome and vnquiet. In peace in the selfe same: that is, in thee, one chiefest, eternall good I will sleep and rest, Amen.

CHAP. XVI.

*That true comfort is to be sought
in God alone.*

WHATSOEVER* I can desire, or imagine for my comfort, I looke not for it in this life, but hereafter. For if I should alone haue all the comforts of the world, and might enioy all the delights therof, it is certaine, that they could not long endure. Wherefore

Ps. 4.

* The
Seruant.

Matt. 16.

Psal. 76.

my soule, thou canst not be fully comforted, nor haue perfect delight but in God, the comforter of the poore, and the receauer of the humble. Expect a while my soule, expect the diuine promise, and thou shalt haue abundance of all good things in heauen. If thou desire inordinatly the things that are present, thou shalt loose the celestiall and eternall. Haue temporal things in vse, and the eternall in desire. Thou canst not be filled with any temporall goods, because thou art not created to enioy them.

Sap. 2.

Phil. 3.

2. Although thou enioyest all that is created, yet canst thou not be happy therby nor blessed: but in God that hath created all things, thy whole beatitude and happines consisteth: not such as is seene, and comended by the foolish louers of the world: but such as the good faithful seruants of Christ expect, and the spirituall, and cleane of hart, whose conuersation is in heauen, sometimes take a tast of. Vaine and short is all human comfort. Blessed and true is the comfort which is receaued in-

wardly

wardly from truth. A deuout man euery where carrieth with him Iesus his comforter, and sayth vnto him: Be present with me Lord Iesus in euery place, and time. Let this be my comfort to be alwaies willing to want all human comfort. And if thy comfort be wanting, let thy will & iust prooffe be vnto me, as the greatest comfort: for thou wilt not be angry alwaies, neither wilt thou threaten for euer.

Pl. 102.

CHAP. XVII.

*That all our care is to be placed
in God.*

SONNE † suffer me to doe with thee what I please. I know what is expedient for thee. Thou thinkest as man: thou iudgeth in many things as humane affection perswadeth thee. * Lord, what thou saiest is true. Thy solicitude for me is greater, then all the care that I can take for my selfe. For he standeth at too great a hazard, that casteth not his whole care vpon thee. Lord, so that

† Our Lord.

* The Seruant.
Matt. 6.
& Ioan. 6.

my

my will may remaine right and firme in thee, do with me whatsoeuer it shall please thee. For it cannot be but good, whatsoeuer thou doest with me.

2. If it be thy will I should be in darknes, be thou blessed: and if it be thy will I should be in light, be thou againe blessed. If thou vouchsafest to comfort me, be thou blessed: and if thou wilt afflict me, be thou also euer blessed. Sonne, [†] so thou oughtest to be, as ready to suffer, as to receaue ioy. Thou oughtest to be as willing to be poore and needy, as plentiful and rich.

3. Lord, ^{*} I wil willingly suffer for thee, whatsoeuer thy pleasure is shall befall me. I will receaue indifferently from thy hand, good and euill, sweet, and sower, delightfull, and sorrowfull: and giue thee thanks for all that happeneth vnto me. Keep me from all sinne, and I will neither feare death, nor hell: so as thou dost not for euer cast me from thee, and blot me out of the booke of life, what tribulation soeuer befall me, shall not hurt me.

† Our
Lord.

* The
Seruant.
Iob. 2.

Pl. 22.

CHAP. XVIII.

*That temporall miseries, by the
example of Christ, are to be
borne patiently.*

SONNE† I descended from Hea-
uen for thy health: I tooke v
pon me thy miseries, my charity &
not any necessity drawing me ther-
unto: that thou mightest learne pa-
tience, and not refuse to beare tem-
porall miseries. For from the houre
of my birth, vntill my death on the
Crosse, I was not without suffering
of griefe. I suffered great want of
temporall things: I often heard ma-
ny complaints against me: I bare
patiently shame and reproaches, for
benefits I receaued ingratitude; for
miracles, blasphemies, for heauen-
ly doctrine, reprehensions.

2. Lord, * for that thou wert
patient in thy life-time, chiefly in
fulfilling the commandment of thy
Father, it is reason that I miserable
sinner should haue patience in all
things according to thy will, and for

mine

Our
Lord.

Ioan. 3.

Esa. 53.

Luc. 2.

* The
Seruant.

Ioan. 5.

myne owne health beare the burthen of this corruptible life , as long as thou wilt . For although this present life be burdensome, yet notwithstanding it is now by thy grace made very meritorious : and by thy example and the footsteps of thy Saints , more plaine and tollerable to the weake . Yea , much more comfortable also , then it was in times past in the old law , when the gate of heauen remained shut : and the way also to heauen seemed darker , when so few tooke care to seeke after thy Kingdome . Neither they also that then were iust , and were ordained to be saued , could enter into the heauenly glory before thy passion , and the debt of thy sacred death was discharged .

Matt. 7.

3. O how great thanks am I bound to giue thee , that thou hast vouchsafed to shew vnto me , and to all faithful soules a direct , & sure way to thy euerlasting kingdome ! For thy life is our way , and by holy patience we go vnto thee that art our Crowne . If thou hadst not gone before vs and taught vs , who would haue taken

care

care to follow ? Alas how many would stay behind , and remaine far off , if they beheld not thy excellent examples ! Behould we are yet could although we haue heard of so many of thy wonders , and thy heavenly documents ! what would become of vs if we had not so great light to follow thee ?

CHAP. XIX.

*Of suffering of iniuries , and who
is proued to be truly
patient .*

WHAT is it † thou sayest ,
Sonne ? Cease to com-
plaine , considering my passion , and
that of my other Saints . Thou hast
not yet made resistance to the shee-
ding of bloud . It is but little thou
sufferest , in comparison of them that
haue suffered so much , so strongly
tempted , so grievously afflicted , so
many waies tried & exercised . Thou
oughtest therfore to call to mind the
heauy sufferings of others , that thou
maist the easier beare the little ad-

uerfities

Ioan. 12.

† Our
Lord .

Heb. 12.

Heb. 11.

uerſities which thou ſuffereſt. And if they ſeem not little, beware leaſt thy impatience be cauſe thereof. Yet whether they be little, or great, endeavour to beare all patiently.

2. How much the better thou diſpoſeſt thy ſelfe to ſuffering, ſo much the more wiſely thou doeſt, and ſo much the more doeſt thou merit thou ſhalt more eaſily alſo endure it, if thy mind be prepared, & thy ſelfe accuſtomed therunto. Do not ſay; I cannot ſuffer theſe things of ſuch a one, at the hands of ſuch a perſon, nor ſuch things are not to be ſuffered by me, for he hath done me great wrong, and vpbraided me with thoſe things which I neuer thought of: but of another I wil willingly ſuffer, and as I ſee all ſee cauſe. Such a thought is fooliſh, it conſidereth not the vertue of patience, nor by whome it ſhall be crowned; but rather waigheth the perſons, and the iniuries offered.

3. He is not truly patient, that will not ſuffer but as much as he thinketh good, and by whome he liſteth. But he that is indeed patient,

mindeth

mindeth not by whome he is exercised, whether by his Superiour, or some of his equals, or by his inferior: whether by a good and holy man, or by a peruerse and vnworthy person. But indifferently from all creatures, how much soeuer, or how often soeuer any aduersity happeneth vnto him, he taketh all thankfully as from the hands of God, and esteemeth it a great gaine: for that nothing before God, how little soeuer, so it be suffered for God, can be without merit.

4. Be thou therfore alwaies prepared for the fight, if thou wilt haue the victory. Without combat thou canst not attaine vnto the Crowne of patience. If thou wilt not suffer, thou refusest to be crowned. But if thou desirest to be crowned, fight manfully, and endure patiently: without labour there is no coming to rest: nor without fight can the victory be obtained. Lord * let that be made possible to me by thy grace, which seemeth impossible to me by nature. Thou knowest that I can suffer little, & that I am quick-

2. Tim:

2.

* The
Seruant.

ly dismayed, when a small aduersity ariseth. Let all exercise of tribulation be made pleasing vnto me, and be wellcome for thy name: for to suffer and to be troubled for thee, is very profitable for my soule.

CHAP. XX.

Of the acknowledging of our owne infirmity: and of the miseries of this life.

* The
Seruant.
Psal. 31.

I will * confesse against me my iniustice: I will confesse vnto thee o Lord my infirmity. Oftentimes it is a small matter that discomforteth, and griueth me. I purpose to resist with courage, but when a small temptation commeth, it bringeth me into very narrow straits. It is sometimes a very trifle, from whence great temptations do proceed. And whilest I thinke my selfe somewhat safe, when I least expect it, I find my selfe sometimes ouercome with a small blast.

Psal. 24.

2. Behould therefore Lord, my humility, and my frailty euery way
knowne

knowne vnto thee. Haue mercy on me and deliuer me out of the mire of my infirmities, that I stick not fast therin: let me not for euer remaine deiected. This is that which oftentimes beareth me back, and confoundeth me in thy sight: for that I am so subiect to fall, & weake in resisting of my passions. And though I do not altogether consent, yet their continuall assaults are troublesome and grieuous vnto me: and it is tedious, & a very irksome thing to liue thus daily in strife. Hereby my infirmity is made knowne vnto me: for that wicked fancies do alwaies much more easily enter in vpon me, then they can be cast out againe.

3. Omighty God of Israel, the zealous louer of faithfull soules: let it please thee to consider the labour and sorrow of thy seruant, and assist him in all whatsoever he undertaketh. Strengthen me with heavenly force, least my old man, my miserable flesh, not fully as yet subiect to the spirit, preuaile and get the vpper hand: against which I ought to

fight, aslong as I breath in this miserable life. Alas, what a kinde of life is this, where tribulations and miseries are neuer wanting! where all is set with snares, and compassed with enemies! For when one tribulation or temptation goeth away, another commeth, yea and during the first conflict also, many others come vnlooked for one after another.

4. And how can a life be loued that hath so many afflictions, and is subiect to so many calamities and miseries? How is it called a life that begetteth so many deaths, and plagues? And yet it is loued, and many seeke to delight themselues therin. The world is oftentimes blamed, that it is deceiptfull and vaine, and yet it is not easily forsaken, because the inclinations of our flesh do too much ouerrule vs. Some things draw vs to loue it, others to contemne it. To the loue of the world do draw vs the concupiscence of the flesh, the cōcupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life: but the paynes and miseries that do iustly

follow

follow them, causeth a hatred and loathsomnes therof.

5. But alas wicked pleasure o-uercommeth the mind which is giuen ouer to the world, & she esteemeth it a delight to be vnder thornes: because she hath neither seene nor tasted the sweetnes of God, and the inward delight of vertue. But they that perfectly contemne the world, and endeaour to liue to God vnder holy discipline, these are not ignorant of the diuine sweetnes, promised to the true forsakers of the world, and do more cleerly see how grievously the world erreth, and how it is many waies deceaued.

Iob. 30.

CHAP. XXI.

*That we are to rest in God a-
boue all his gifts.*

ABOVE * all things, and in all things, my soule, thou shalt euer rest in God, for he is the euerlasting rest of the Saints. Grant me most sweet and louing Iesu, to rest in thee aboue all creatures, aboue al

* The
Seruicem.

Rom. 8.

health and beauty, aboue all glory and honour, aboue all power and dignity, aboue all knowledg and learning, aboue all riches and arts, aboue all ioy and gladnes, aboue all fame and praise, aboue all sweetnes and comfort, aboue all hope and promise, aboue all merit and desire, aboue all gifts and presents that thou canst giue & impart vnto vs, aboue all ioy and iubily that the mind of man can receaue and feele: lastly aboue Angels and Archangels, and aboue all the heauenly Host, aboue all visible and inuisible things, and aboue all that, that thou art not, my God.

2. For that thou, my Lord God, surpassest all, thou alone most high, thou alone most powerfull, thou alone most full and sufficient, thou alone most sweet, and comfortable, thou alone most beautifull, and louing, thou alone most noble and glorious aboue all things: in whome all good things together both are perfectly, and euer haue beene and shall be: and therefore it is too little and not sufficient, whatsoeuer thou

bestowest

bestowest on me besides thy selfe, or reuealest vnto me of thy selfe, or promistest whilst thou art not seene, and not fully obtained: for surely my hart cannot rest, nor be fully contented vnlesse it rest in thee, and surmount all gifts and creatures what soeuer.

3. O my most beloued spouse Christ Iesus, the most chaste loue, the gouernour of all creatures: who wil giue me winges of true liberty to fly, and rest in thee! O when shall it be fully granted me to consider in quietnes of mind, & see how sweet thou art my Lord God! When shall I fully recollect my selfe in thee, that for thy loue I may not feele my selfe, but thee alone, aboue all sense, and feeling, in a manner not knowne vnto all. But now I oftentimes lament, and beare my infelicity with griefe. For that many euells occur in this vale of miseries, which do often trouble, grieue, and darken me, often hinder and distract me, allure and intangle me, to the end I should not haue free accessse vnto thee, and that I should not enioy thole sweet

Ps. 53.

Dan. 13.

and heauenly imbracings , which thou alwaies giuest to the blessed and celestially spirits . Let my sighes and manifold desolation on earth moue thee .

4. O Iesus, splendor of eternall glory , and comfort of the pilgrime soule ! with thee is my tongue without voice , and my silence speaketh vnto thee . How long doth my Lord delay to come ! Let him come vnto me his poore seruant , and make me glad . Let him put out his hand , and deliuer me miserable wretch from all anguish . Come , come blessed Lord : for without thee I shall haue no ioyfull day , nor houre . Thou art my ioy , and without thee there is nothing but want . A wretched creature I am , and in a manner imprisoned , and loaden with irons : vntill thou comfortest me with the light of thy presence , and giuest me liberty , and shewest a fauourable countenance vnto me .

5. Let others seeke what they please instead of thee : but for me , nothing els doth , nor shall delight me , but thou only my God , my hope ,

my

my euerlasting health . I will not
hould my peace , nor cease to pray ,
vntill thy grace returne againe , and
thou speake inwardly vnto me . Be-
hould † I am heere : behould I come
vnto thee , because thou hast called
vpon me . Thy teares , and the de-
fire of thy soule , thy humility , and
the contrition of thy hart , haue in-
clined and brought me vnto thee .

And * I said : Lord I haue called
thee , and haue desired to enioy thee
being ready to forsake all things for
thee . For thou first hast stirred me
vp that I might seeke thee . Blessed
be thou therefore o Lord , that hast
shewed this goodnes to thy seruant ,
according to the multitude of thy
mercies .

6 . What hath thy seruant more to
say before thee , but that he do greatly
humble himselfe in thy sight , alwaies
mindfull of his owne iniquity , and
basenes ? For there is none like vnto
thee in all whatsoeuer is wonderful ,
in heauen and earth . Thy words
are good , thy iudgments true , and
by thy prouidence all things are go-
uerned . Praise therfore and glory be

† Our
Lord .

* The
Seruant .

Pr. 35.

vnto thee, o wisdome of the eternall
Father: let my tongue, my soule, &
all creatures togeather praise and
blesse thee.

CHAP. XXII.

*Of the remembrance of the ma-
nifold benefits of God.*

* The
Seruant.

Pl. 113.

OPEN* o Lord my hart in thy
Law; and teach me to walke
in thy commandements. Grant me
to vnderstand thy will, and to re-
member thy benefits, as well in ge-
nerall, as in particuler, with great
reuerence & diligent consideration:
that hence forward I may be able
worthily to giue thee thanks. But
I know, and confesse, that I am not
able to giue thee due thanks, for the
fauours which thou bestowest vpon
me, euen in the least moment. I am
lesse then the least of thy benefits: &
when I consider the excellēcy of thy
Maiesty, the greatnes therof maketh
my spirit to faint.

2. All that we haue in our soule
and body, and whatsoeuer we pos-

sesse

lesse outwardly or inwardly, naturally or spiritually, are thy benefits, and do praise thee as bountifull, pious, and good, from whome we haue receaued all that is good. Although one hath receaued more, another lesse, all notwithstanding are thine, and without thee euen the least cannot be had. He that hath receaued greater, cannot glory of his owne desert, nor extoll himselfe aboue others, nor insult ouer the lesser: for he is greater and better that ascribeth least vnto himselfe, and is more humble & deuout in rendring thanks. And he that esteemeth himselfe basest of all men, and iudgeth himselfe most vnworthy, is fittest to receaue greater blessings.

3. And he that hath receaued fewer, ought not to be sory nor beare it impatiently, nor enuy them that are enriched with greater store, but attend rather vnto thee, and chiefly praise thy goodnes, for that thou bestowest thy gifts so bountifullly, so freely, and so willingly without respect of persons. All things proceed from thee, and therefore in all things

thou

thou art to be praised. Thou knowest what is fit to be given to every one: and why this man hath lesse, and he more, it is not ours, but thine to determine, who dost waigh in iust measure the deserts of every one.

4. Wherefore my Lord God, I esteeme it as a great benefit not to haue much, wherby outwardly and before men I might seeme worthy of praise and glory: so that he, who considereth his owne pouerty, and basenes, ought not therfore to conceaue griefe, or sorrow, or to be therfore troubled, but rather to take great comfort, and to be glad: for that thou, O God, hast chosen the poore and humble, and the despised of this world for thy selfe, and for thy familiar & domesticall friends. Witnesses are thy Apostles themselves, whome thou hast appointed princes ouer all the earth. And yet they liued without complaint in the world, so humble and simple, meane to the eyes of men, without all malice and deceit, that they reioyced to receaue cōtumelies for thy name:

and

1. Cor. 1.

Pl. 44.

1. Thess. 2.

Act. 5.

and what the world abhorreth, they imbraced with great affection.

5. Nothing therefore ought so to reioice him that loueth thee, and acknowledgeth thy benefits, as the accomplishment of thy will in himselfe, and the pleasure of thy eternal appointment: wherewith he ought to be so contented and comforted, that he would as willingly be the least, as any would wish to be the greatest: & as peaceable & content in the last as in the first place: and as willingly to be despised and contemned, and to be of no esteeme or accompt, as to be preferred in honour before all others, and to be greater in the world. For thy will and the loue of thy glory, ought to be preferred before all things: and to comfort him more, and please him better, then all the benefits which he hath receaued or can desire.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

*Of foure thinges that bring
much peace.*

† Our
Lord.

* The
Seruant.

† Our
Lord.

Matt. 26.

& Io. 5. 6.

1. Cor. 10.

Lue. 14.

Matt. 6.

* The
Seruant.
Matt. 5.

SONNE † now I will teach thee the way of peace, and true liberty. Do * Lord, I beseech thee, as thou saist, for I shall be very glad to heare it. Endeauour † my Sonne to do rather the will of another, then thine owne. Euer choose rather to haue lesse then more. Alwaies seeke the lowest place, and to be inferior to euery one. With alwaies, and pray, that the will of God may be wholly fulfilled in thee. Behold such a man entred into the limits of peace and most quiet rest.

2. Lord * this thy short speach containeth much perfection. It is little in words but full in sense, and abundant in fruit. For if it could exactly be kept by me, then should I not so easily be troubled. For as often as I feele my selfe vnquiet, & afflicted, I find that I haue strayed from this doctrine. But thou that

canst

canst all things, and euer louest the good and profit of my soule, increase in me thy grace, that I may fulfill thy words and perfect mine owne health.

A Prayer against euill thoughts.

3. My * Lord God, be not far from me: my God haue regard to helpe me, for sundry thoughts haue risen vp against me, and great feares afflicting my soule. How shall I passe through them without hurt? How shall I breake them? I, saith he, † wil go before thee, and will humble the glorious of the earth. I will open the doores of the prison, and reueale vnto thee the hidden secrets. Do * Lord as thou saiest, & let all euill thoughts fly from before thy face. This is my hope, and my only comfort, to fly vnto thee in all tribulation, to trust in thee, to call vpon thee from my hart, and to expect patiently thy comfort.

A Prayer for enlightening of the mind.

4. Enlighten * me good Iesu, with

* The
Seruant.
Pl. 70.

† Our
Lord.

Esa. 45.

* The
Seruant.

* The
Seruant.

with the clearnes of inward light, & expell all darknes of my hart. Represse the many wandring thoughts, and beate downe the fury of the temptations which violently assault me. Fight strongly for me, and vanquish the euill beasts, that is the alluring concupiscences, that peace may be made in thy vertue, and abundance of thy praise sound in thy holy Court, which is a pure conscience. Command the winds and tempests: say vnto the sea, Be still: and to the north-wind, Blow not: and a great calme shall ensue.

Matt. 8.

Psal. 42.

5. Send forth thy light and thy truth, that they may shine vpon the earth, for I am empty and vnprofitable earth, vntill thou impartest thy light vnto me. Powre out thy grace from aboue, wash my hart with heauenly dew, giue waters of deuotion, to wash the face of the earth, to bring forth good and perfect fruit. Lift vp my mind, ouercharged with the waight of sinne: draw vp my whole desire to heauenly treasures, that hauing tasted the sweetnes of celestially happines, it may loath to thinke of

earthly

earthly vanities.

6. Take me violently to thee, and deliuer me from all vnstable comfort of creatures: for no created thing can fully quiet & satisfie my desire. Ioine me vnto thee with an vnspcakable band of loue: for thou only fillest the mind of him that loues thee, and without thee all things are distastfull.

CHAP. XXIIII.

*Of flying curious inquiry of the
life of others.*

SONNE[†] be not curious: trouble not thy selfe with idle cares. What is this or that to thee? do thou follow me. For what is it to thee, whether that man be such or no, or whether this man do, or speake this or that? Thou shalt not need to answer for others, but shalt giue account of thy selfe. Why therfore dost thou trouble thy selfe? Behould I know euery one what he is, and do see all things that are vnder the sunne: and do vnderstand how it is

† Our
Lord.
Eccl. 3.
8. 1. Tim.
5.

Ioan. 21.

Gal. 6.

N

with

with euery one, what he thinketh, what he would, and at what his intention aymeth. All things therefore are to be committed vnto me: but do thou keepe thy self in good peace, and suffer the vnquiet to do as they will. Whatsoever they shall haue done, or sayd, shall fall vpon themselves, for they cannot deceaue me.

2. Desire not too great fame in this world, nor to be knowne to many, nor to haue the priuate loue of men: for these things breed distractions, and cause great darknes of hart. I would willingly vtter my words, and reueale my secrets vnto thee, if thou didest diligently obserue my comming: and didest open the dore of thy hart vnto me. Be carefull and watch in prayer, and humble thy selfe in all things.

CHAP. XXV.

Wherin doth the firme peace of the hart, and true profit consist.

† Our
Lord.

SONNE † I haue sayd: Peace
I leaue to you, my peace I giue

to you: not as the world giueth, do I giue to you: All do desire peace, but all care not for those things that appertaine vnto true peace. My peace is with the humble, & meeke of hart. Thy peace shall be in much patience. If thou wilt heare me and follow my voyce thou maist enioy much peace. What * then shall I do? In † euery thing attend vnto thy self what thou doest & what thou sayst: and direct thy whole intention vnto this, that thou maiest please me alone, and desire or seeke nothing out of me. Of the sayings and doings of others iudge nothing rashly: neither do thou intangle thy selfe with things not committed vnto thee: and doing thus, it may be thou shalt be little or seldome troubled.

2. But neuer to feelee any trouble at all, nor to suffer any griefe of hart or body, is not the state of this life, but of euerlasting rest. I thinke not therefore that thou hast found true peace, if thou feelest no sorrow, nor that then all is well, if thou haue no aduersary: nor that it is perfect, if all things be done according to thy

Ioan. 4.

* The
Seruant.† Our
Lord.

desire . Neyther do thou then esteeme highly of thy selfe , or imagine thy selfe to be especially beloved , if thou be in great deuotion , and sweetnes : for in these things a true loue of vertue is not tried : neither doth the profit and perfection of man consist in hauing them .

* The
Seruant.
† Our
Lord .

3 . Wherin* then Lord ? In† offering thy selfe from the very bottom of thy hart , vnto the diuine seruice , not seeking thine own interest , or commodity , neither in great nor little , neither in time nor eternity : so that with equall countenance , thou maist persist in thanksgiuing , both in prosperity and in aduersity , waighing all things with an equall ballance . If thou be of such courage and so patient in hope , that when inward comfort is withdrawne from thee , thou prepare thy hart to suffer greater matters , and not iustify thy selfe , as though thou oughtest not to suffer these , and so great afflictions , but iustify me in whatsoever I appoint , and praise my holy name : then thou walkest in the true and right way of peace : and thou shalt

haue

haue vndoubted hope to see my face againe with great ioy. And if thou attaine to the full contempt of thy selfe; then shalt thou enioy as great abundance of peace, as thy banishment may permit.

CHAP. XXVI.

*Of the excellency of a free mind, which
humble prayer better deserueth,
then reading.*

LORD * it is the worke of a perfect man, neuer to slack his mind from the attentiuē thought of heauēly things, & as it were to passe without care through many cares: not faintingly, but with a certaine priuiledg of a free mind, adhering by inordinate affection to no creature.

* The
Sequant.

² I beseech thee most mercifull God, preserue me from the cares of this life: least I should be too much intangled therby: & from the many necessities of the body, least I should be enthralled by pleasure frō all hinderāces of the soule, least broken with troubles I should be deie-

Gen. 3. &
Rom. 7.

sted and dismayed. I meane not frō those things that worldly vanity so greatly desireth: but from those miseries, that as punishments, do weigh downe and hinder the soule of thy seruant, with the generall curse of mortality, that it cannot enter into liberty of spirit, as often as it would.

Rom. 12.

3. O my God, the vnspeakable sweetnes, make bitter vnto me all carnall comfort, which may draw me away frō the loue of euerlasting happynes, and wickedly allure me to it selfe with the force of a certaine present delight. Let not flesh and bloud ouercome me o Lord. Let not the world and the short glory thereof deceaue me. Let not the Diuell and his subtile fraud supplant me. Giue me force to resist, patience to suffer, and constancy to perseuere. Giue me instead of all the comforts of the world the most sweet vnction of thy spirit: and in lieu of carnall loue, powre into my soule the loue of thy name.

4. Echould, meate, drinke, cloathes, & other necessities for the maintenance of the body, are bur-

den some

densome vnto a feruent spirit. Graūt me to affect such nourishments in due measure, and not to be intangled with an ouer great desire of the. It is not lawfull to renounce them wholly, for that nature is to be maintayned: but to desire superfluities, and those things that do rather delight, then sustayne, the law of God forbiddeth: for otherwise the flesh would rebell against the spirit. Here in I beseech thee, let thy hand gouerne me, and teach me, that I may not exceed.

CHAP. XXVII.

*That priuate loue most hindreth
from the chiefeſt good.*

Sonne †, thou oughtest to giue all for all, and to retaine nothing of thy selfe. Know that the loue of thy selfe, doth hurt thee more, then any thing in the world. According to the loue, and affection thou bearest them, so doth euery thing cleaue vnto thee more or lesse. If thy loue be pure, simple, & well ordered, thou

† Our
Lord.

Matt. 6.

thalt be free from bondage. Couet not that which thou maiest not haue. Be not willing to haue that, which may hinder thee and deprive thee of inward liberty. It is a wonderfull thing that thou committest not thy selfe wholly vnto me, from the bot-tome of thy hart, with all things, that thou canst desire, or haue.

Exod. 18.
& Mich.

+

2. Why dost thou cōsume thy selfe with vayne griefe? Why tyrest thou thy mind with needlesse cares? Resigne thy selfe to me, and thou shalt feele no losse at all. If thou seekest this or that, and wouldest be heere or there, to enioy thine owne commoditie and pleasure, thou shalt neuer be in quiet, nor free from trouble of mind, for in euery thing, somewhat will be wanting, and in euery place there will be some that will crosse thee.

3. Not euery externall thing therfore attained, and heaped together helpeth thee: but it rather auai-leth, if thou despise it, and doest root it out from thy hart, which thou must not vnderstand only of thy re-nenewes and wealih, but of the de-

fire

fire of honour also, and vaine praise: all which do passe away with this fading world. The place auayleth litle, if the spirit of feruour be wanting: neither shall that peace which is sought abroad long continue, if the state of thy hart be destitute of a true foundation; that is, vnlesse thou persist in me, thou maist change, but not better thy selfe. For when occasion doth happen, thou shalt find that which thou soughtest to fly, and perhaps more.

A Prayer for cleansing the hart, & obtaining of heauenly wisdom.

4. Confirme * me Lord with the grace of thy holy spirit. Giue me force to strengthen my inward man, and to purge my hart from all vnprofitable care, and grief; not to be drawne away with sundry desires of any thing eyther little or great: but to consider all things, how they are transitory, and do quickly fade, & that my selfe do also passe away together with them: for nothing is permanent vnder the sunne, where all things are vanity, and affliction

Esa. 4. 2.

* The
Seruant.
Ps. 50.

Eph. 3.

Matt. 6.

Eccls. 1.
& 2.

of mind: O how wise is he that so considereth them!

Eph. 4.

5. Graunt me Lord. heavenly wisdom, that I may learne aboue all things to seeke and find thee, aboue all things to delight in thee, and to loue thee: and to thinke of all created things as they are, according to the dispositiō of thy wisdom. Graunt me prudently to auoyd him, that flatters me, and to suffer patiently him that contradicts me. It is great wisdom not to be moued with euery blast of wordes: nor to giue eare to dangerous flattery: for so we shall go on securely in the way which we haue begun.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Against the tongue of Slaundersers.

† Our
Lord.

1. Cor. 4.

S O N N E † be not grieued if some thinke euill of thee, and speake that which thou dost not willingly heare. Thou oughtest to iudge the worst of thy selfe, and to thinke no man weaker then thy selfe. If thou walke according to spirit, thou wilt

not

not much esteeme of flying wordes . It is no small wisdome , to be silent in time of euill , & inwardly to turne to me , and not to be troubled with the iudgment of men .

2 . Let not thy peace be in the tongues of men . For whether they iudge well or euill , thou art neuer thelesse alwayes the same . Where is true peace , and true glory ? Is it not in me ? And he that coueteth not to please men , nor feareth to displease them , shall enioy much peace . From inordinate loue and vayne feare ariseth all disquiet of hart , and distraction of the senses .

Ioan. 17.

CHAP. XXIX.

*How we ought to call vpon God , and
blesse him when tribulation
draweth neere .*

BLESSED * (o Lord) be thy name for euer : since it pleaseth thee that this temptation and tribulation should fall vpon me , I cannot fly it : but haue need to fly to thee , that thou maist help me , and turne

* The
Seruant .

Iob. 1. &
Pl. 112.

Matt. 26.

it to my good. Lord I am now afflicted, and it is not well with me, I am much troubled with this present griefe. And now, beloued Father, what shall I say? I am taken in narrow straits, saue me in this houre. Yea therfore I am fallē in this houre, that thou maist be glorified, when I shall be greatly humbled, and by thee deliuered. Let it please thee Lord to deliuer me: for poor wretch that I am, what can I do, and whether shall I go without thee? Graunt patience Lord, euen this tyme also. Help me my God, & then I will not feare how much soeuer I be oppressed.

Matt. 6.

2. And now in this, what shall I say? Lord, thy wil be done. I haue wel deserued to be afflicted and grieued. Surely I ought to beare it: and I would to God I might beare it with patience, vntill the tempest be passed ouer, and it become calme. But thy omnipotent hand is able to take this temptation from me, and to aswage the violence therof, that I vtterly sinke not vnder it, as oftentimes heretofore thou hast done vnto me,

my

my Lord, my Mercy. And how much the more hard it is to me, so much the more easie is this change of thy mighty hand to thee.

CHAP. XXX.

Of crauing the diuine aide, and confidence of recouering grace.

SONNE † I am thy Lord, who do vse to giue comfort in the day of tribulation. Come vnto me whe it is not well with thee. This is that which most of all hindreth heavenly consolation, that thou art slow in turning thy selfe vnto praier. For before thou dost earnestly commend thy selfe to me, thou seekest many comforts, and delightest thy selfe in outward things. And hence it proceedeth that all doth little profit thee, vntill thou consider that I am he, that deliuer those that trust in me: and that out of me there is neither powerfull help, nor profitable counsell, nor remedy that can continue. But now thou hauing recovered breath after the tēpest, gather

† Our Lord.

Nahū. i.

Matt. ii.

strength

Matt. 23.

strength againe in the light of my mercies : for I am at hand saith our Lord, to repaire all, not only entirely, but also abundantly.

2. Is there any thing hard to me? or am I like vnto him that promiseth and performeth not? Where is thy faith? Be firme and constant. Take courage and be patient, comfort will be giuen thee in due time. Attend me, expect, I will come and cure thee. It is a temptation that vexeth thee : and a vaine feare that affrighteth thee. What els doth the care for future incertainties bring thee, but sorrow vpon sorrow? Sufficient for the day is the euill therof. It is a vaine and vnprofitable thinge to be grieved, or to reioice for future things, that perhaps will neuer happen.

Matt. 6.

3. But it is incident to man, to be deluded with such imaginations: and a signe of little courage to be so easily drawne away by the suggestion of the enemy. For he careth not so he delude and deceaue thee, whether it be true or false which he proposeth: whether he ouerthrow thee

with

with the loue of present, or the feare of future things. Let not therefore thy hart be troubled, neither do thou feare. Belieue in me and put thy trust in my mercy. When thou thinkest thy self furthest off frō me, oftentimes I am neereſt vnto thee.

When thou iudgeſt that almoſt all is loſt, then oftentimes greateſt gaine of merit is at hand. All is not loſt when any thing falleth out contrary vnto thee. Thou muſt not iudg according to that which thou feeleſt for the preſent: nor giue thy ſelfe ouer to any grieſe from whence ſoeuer it cometh, as though all hope of deliuey were quite gone.

4. Thinke not thy ſelfe wholly leſt, although for a time I haue ſent thee ſome tribulatiō, or withdrawne thy deſired comfort: for this is the way to the Kingdome of heauen. And without doubt it is more expedient for thee, & the reſt of my ſeruants, that ye be exerciſed with many aduerſities, then that ye ſhould haue all things according to your deſires. I know the ſecret thoughts of thy hart, and that it is very expedient

Pf. 90.

dient

dient for thy soules health, that thou be left sometimes without tast and feeling of spirituall sweetnes, least perhaps thou shouldest be puffed vp with good successe, and shouldest please thy selfe in that which thou art not. That which I haue giuen, I can take away, and restore it againe when I please.

Iac. 1.

5. When I giue it, it is mine: when I withdraw it, I take not any thing that is thine: for mine is euery good, and euery perfect gift. If I send thee affliction, or any crosse whatsoeuer, repine not, nor be not dismayed: I can quickly lift thee vp againe, and turne all thy sorrow into ioy. Neuerthelesse I am iust, and greatly to be praised, when I do all this vnto thee.

6. If thou be wise, and consider well thy case, thou wilt neuer yield so cowardly to grieve, for any aduersity that befallles thee, but rather reioyce and giue thanks: yea to accompt this thy only ioy, that afflicting thee with sorrows, I do not spare thee. As my Father hath loued me, I also loue you, said I vnto my

be-

beloued Disciples, whom certainly I sent not to temporall ioyes, but to great conflicts: not to honours, but to contempts: not to idleness, but to labours: not to rest, but to bring much fruit in patience. My Sonne remember these words.

Ioan: 13.

CHAP. XXXI.

Of the contempt of all creatures to find our Creatour.

LORD *, I stand yet in need of great grace, if I must go so far as that no man or creature can hinder me. For as long as any thing houldeth me, I can not fly freely vnto thee. He desired to fly with great liberty that said, Who will giue me wings like a doue, and I will fly and rest? What thing more quiet then a simple eye? And what more free, then he that desireth nothing vpon earth? Man ought therefore to ascend aboue all creatures, and perfectly to forsake himselfe, and to remaine in excessse of mind: & consider that thou, who art the maker of all things, hast no-

* The
Seruant.

Tr. 54.

Matt. 6.

O

thing

thing amongst creatures like vnto thee. And vnlesse a man be free frō the affection of all creatures, he cānot with freedome of mind attend vnto diuine thinges. And for this cause there are so few contemplatiue men to be found, for that few can wholly sequester themselues from fading creatures.

2. Much grace is necessary to liſt vp a ſoule, and to carry it aboue it ſelfe. And vnlesse a man be liſted vp in ſpirit, and deliuered from all creatures, and wholly vnited vnto God: whatſoeuer he knoweth, and whatſoeuer he hath, is of little accompt. Long ſhall he be little, and lye in earthly baſenes, that eſteemeth any thing great, but the one only vnmeaſurable and eternall good. For whatſoeuer is not God is nothing, and ought to be accounted as nothing. There is great difference betweene the wiſdome of a ſpiritual and deuout perſon, and the knowledge of a learned and ſtudioſus Clerke. Far more noble is that learning which floweth from aboue, from the diuine influence, then that which is

pain-

painfully gotten by the wit of man .

3. There are many that desire contemplation, but they endeavour not to exercise those things that are required therunto. It is a great hinderance that we rest in signes & sensible things, and haue little true mortification. I know not what it is, nor by what spirit we are lead ; nor what we pretend, we that seeme to be called spirituall, that we take so much paynes, and so great care for transitory and base thinges, and scarce or seldome thinke of our owne inward profit, with full recollection of our senses .

4. Alas, presently after a sleight recollection, we breake forth : and weigh not our workes with diligent examination. We mind not where our affections lye : nor bewaile the impurity and many faults that are in all our actions . For all flesh had corrupted her way, & therefore did that generall floud ensue . Sith our inward affection then is much corrupted, it must needs be that our action proceeding therof, be corrupted, as a signe of the want of inward

Gen. 6. &

7.

vigour. From a pure hart proceedeth the fruit of good life.

5. We aske how much one hath done: but how vertuous his actions are, is not so diligently considered. We inquire whether he be strong, rich, beautifull, handsome, a good writer, a good singer, or a good labourer: but how poore he is in spirit, how patient, and meeke, how deuout & spirituall, is seldome spoken of. Nature respecteth outward things, grace turneth herselfe to the inward vertues. That is often deceaued: this hath her trust in God, to the end she be not deceaued.

CHAP. XXXII.

Of the denyall of our selues, and forsaking all our affections.

SONNE^r, thou canst not possesse perfect liberty, vnlesse thou wholly deny thy selfe. All such as be louers of themselues are bound in fetters, they are couetous, curious, wanderers, seekers of ease, and not of those things that appertaine to

Iesus

↑ Our
Lord .

Matt. 16.
& 19.

Iesus Christ; but oftentimes deuising, and framing that which will not continue. For all shall perish that proceedeth not from God. Keep this short and complete word, Forsake all, & thou shalt find all. Leauethy inordinate desires, & thou shalt find rest. Consider this well: and when thou hast fulfilled it, thou shalt vnderstand all.

2. Lord *, this is not one dayes worke, nor childrens sport: yea in this short sentence all the perfection of Religious persons is included. Sonne †, thou must not go back nor straight waies be deiected, whē thou hearest the way of the perfect; but rather be stirred vp to more worthy & noble attēpts, or at least to conceaue an earnest desire thereof. I would it were so wel with thee, and thou wert come so far, that thou wert no longer a lout of thy self, but didst stand meerly at my beck, and at his whom I haue appointed a Father ouer thee; then thou shouldest exceedingly please me, and all thy life would passe away in ioy and peace. Thou hast yet many thinges to forsake

* The
Seruant.

† Our
Lord.

Apoc. 3.

which vnlesse thou wholly resigne o-
uer vnto me, thou shalt not attaine
to that which thou desirest. I coun-
sell thee to buy of me purified gould,
that thou mayst become rich, that
is, heavenly wisdom, which trea-
deth vnder foot all base and earthly
things. Set little by the wisdom of
this world, and esteeme not of the
contentment of men, nor thine own
fancies.

Matt. 13.

3. I said, that thou shouldest
buy the meane and base things, with
the precious, and those that were
with men of great esteeme. For true
heavenly wisdom seemeth very
base, and of small accompt, and is
scarce thought of by men: for that
esteemeth not highly of it selfe, nor
seeketh to be magnified vpon earth,
which many praise from the teeth
outward, but in their life they are
far from it: yet is it the precious
pearle which is hidden from ma-
ny.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIII.

*Of Inconstancy of hart, and of
directing our finall intentions
vnto God.*

SONNE, I trust not to thy affection: that which now is, will quickly change into another. As long as thou liuest thou art subiect to mutability, euen against thy will: so that now thou art merry, now sad, now quiet, now troubled, now deuout, now distracted, now diligent, now idle, now heauy, now light. But he that is wise, and well instructed in spirit, remaineth alwaies one in the middest of these changes, not heeding what he seeketh in himself, or which way the wind of mutability bloweth: but that the whole intention of his mind, may tend as it ought, to the most perfect and best end. For so he may continue one, & the selfe same, without any change in the midst of so many sundry chaunces, directing alwaies the sincere eye of his intention vnto thee.

† Our
Lord.

Matt. 6.

Ioan. 11.

Matt. 6.

2. And how much purer the eye of the intention is, so much the more constantly doth he passe through the variety of many contrary waues. But in many things the eye of a sincere intention waxeth blind, for it quickly looketh vpon some delight, some object that occurreth. And it is rare to find one that is wholly free from all blemish of seeking himselfe. So the Iewes in times past came into Bethania to Martha and Mary, not for Iesus alone, but to see Lazarus also. The eye of our intention therefore, is to be purged, that it may be sincere & pure, and to be directed vnto me, neglecting the multitude and variety of earthly objects,

CHAP. XXXIIII.

That God is sweet aboue all things,
and in all thinges to him
that loueth.

* The
Sequant.

BEHOULD * my God, and all
things! What would I haue
more, and what can I desire more
happy? O sweet and comfortable

word

word! but to him that loueth the word, not the world, nor those things that are in the world. My God, and all things! Inough is said to him that vnderstandeth: and it is pleasant to him that loueth, to repeat it often, For when thou art present, all things do yield delight, but when thou art absent, al becomes irksome. Thou giuest quiet of hart and much peace, and pleasant ioy. Thou makest men think well of all, and praise thee in all things: neither can any thing please vs long without thee: but if it be pleasant and delightful, thy grace must be present, & it must be seasoned with the sweetnes of thy wisdom.

2. What can be distastfull vnto him, to whome thou art pleasing? And whome thou delightest nor, what can be pleasant? But the wise of the world, and that haue their contentment in sensuall things, cannot attaine to thy wisdom, for in the world is much vanity, & in the flesh is death. But they that follow thee by the contempt of worldly things, & mortification of the flesh, are pro-

1. Cor. 1.
Rom. 8.
& 1. Io. 2.

ued to be truly wise: for they are changed from vanity to truth, from flesh to spirit. To these God is sweet, and what good soever is found in creatures, they wholly referre vnto the praise of their Maker. Notwithstanding great, yea very great is the difference betweene the sweetnes of the Creatour, and of the creature, of eternity and of time, of vncreated and created light.

3. O euerlasting light, surpassing al created lights, cast forth the beams of thy brightnesse from aboue, and pierce the most inward corners of my hart: purifie, reioyce, clarifie & quicken my spirit with all the powers therof, that I may cleaue vnto thee with excesse of vnspeakable ioy. O when will that blessed and desired houre come, that I may be filled with thy presence, and thou maist be vnto me all, in all things: as long as this is not graunted me, I shall not haue full nor perfect ioy. Alas! my old man yet liueth in me, he is not wholly crucified, he is not perfectly dead. He doth yet couet strongly against the spirit, and moueth

Rom. 7.

ciuil

chaill warres, and suffereth not the kingdome of my soule to be in peace.

4. But thou that rulest the powers of the sea, and asswagest the motion of the waues, rise and help me: dissipate the people that desire war, and destroy them in thy might, and let thy hand be glorified: for there is no hope nor refuge for me, but in thee, my Lord God.

Ps. 33.

Psal. 72.

Ps. 30.

CHAP. XXXV.

That there is no security from temptation in this life.

SONNE^r, there is no security in this life: as long as thou liuest thou shalt alwayes haue need of spirituall armour. Thou liuest among enemies, and art assaulted on all sides: if therefore thou defendest not thy selfe on euery side with the shield of patience, thou canst not be long vnwounded. Moreouer if thou fixe not thy hart on me with a sincere will to suffer all things for me, thou canst not sustaine the heate of this battaile, nor

† Our Lord.

Iob. 7.

2. Cor. 6.

Apoc. 2.

get that victorious crowne which they haue that are in glory. Thou oughtest therefore manfully to goe through all, & to vse a strong hand against whatsoeuer withſtandeth thee. For to him that ouercommeth is giuen Manna; and to the negligent is left much woe.

2. If thou seekest rest in this world, how wilt thou then attaine to euerlasting rest? Giue not thy selfe to much ease, but to much patience. Seeke true peace, not in earth, but in heauen; not in men, nor in any creature, but in God alone. Thou oughtest for the loue of God willingly to vndergoe whatsoeuer labours, to endure whatsoeuer griefes, temptations, vexations, anxieties, necessities, infirmities, iniuries, detractions, reprehensions, humiliations, confusions, corrections, and contempts: these help to the attaining of vertue: these trye a Nouice of Christ, these make a heauely crown. I will giue an euerlasting reward for a short labour, and infinite glory for transitory confusion.

3. Thinkest thou, that thou

shalt

shalt alwaies haue spirituall consolations at will? My Saints had not so, but many afflictions, and sundry temptations, and many discomforts: all which they endured patiently, and trusted rather in God, then in themselves: knowing that the sufferings of this time are not condigne to the deseruing of future glory. Wilt thou haue that straight waies, which many after teares, and great labours haue hardly obtained? Expect the comming of thy Lord, do manfully, be of good courage: feare not, do not flye, but offer both body and soule for the glory of God. I will reward thee in most plentifull manner, and I will be with thee in all thy tribulations.

Rom. 8.

Pr. 26.

CHAP. XXXVI.

*Against the vaine Iudgments of
men.*

SONNE, [†]fixe thy hart stedfastly on God, and feare not the iudgments of men, when thy conscience giueth testimony of thy iustice and

† Our
Lord.

innocency . It is a good and a happy thing to suffer in that sort : neither will it be burdensome to an humble mind , nor to him that trusteth rather in God , then in himselfe . The most part of men are given to talke much , and therefore little care is to be had of their words : neyther is it possible to satisfy all . Though the Apostle endeauoured to please al in our Lord , and made himselfe all vnto all , yet he little regarded that he was iudged by humane day .

1. Cor. 9.

2. Cor. 4.

Col. 1.

2. He did for the edification & health of others as much as he could , and lay in him : yet could he not hinder , but that he was sometimes iudged , and despised by others . Therefore he committed all to God , who knew all , & defended himselfe with patience , and humility against euill tongues , and such as thought vanities and lyes , and spake what they listed : Yet sometimes notwithstanding he answered , least the weake might haue receaued scandall by his silence .

3. Who art thou , that fearest a mortall man ? to day he is , and to

morrow

morrow he is not seene, Feare God & the terror of men shall not trouble thee. What harme can the wordes or iniuries of any do thee? he rather hurteth himselfe then thee: neyther can he auoyd the iudgments of God, be he what he will. Haue thou God before thine eyes, and contend not with complayning wordes. And if for the present thou seemest to be troaden down, and to suffer shame & confusion, without desert, do not repine, neyther doe thou lessen thy crowne by thy impatience; but rather lift vp thine eyes to me in heauen. I am able to deliuer thee from all shame and wrong, and to repay euery one according to their works.

CHAP. XXXVII.

*Of a full and pure resignation of our
selues for the obtaining free-
dome of heart.*

Sonne, leaue thy selfe, & thou shalt find me. Make choice of nothing, appropriate nothing to thy selfe, and thou shalt euer gaine. For

greater

2. Mac. 3.

Rom. 2.

1. Cor. 13.

Heb. 12.

† Our
Lord.

¶ The
Seruant .

† Our
Lord .

greater grace shall alwaies be given thee , when thou dost perfectly resignethy selfe , and not turne back to take thy selfe againe . Lord , * how often shall I resigne my selfe ? and wherein shall I forsake my selfe ? Allwaies , † and in etery thing , as wel in little as in great . I do except nothing , but do require that thou be as it were naked and void of all things . Otherwise , how canst thou be perfectly mine , and I thine , vnlesse both within and without thou be free from all self-wil ? And how much the sooner thou dost this , so much the better shalt thou finde thy selfe , and how much the more fully and sincerely thou dost it , so much the more shalt thou please me , and so much the more shalt thou gaine .

2 . Some there are that resigne themselves , but with some exceptio . For they put not their whole trust in God , and therefore do labour to provide for themselves . Some also at the first do offer all , but afterwards being assailed with temptations , do returne againe to that which they had left , and therefore they go not for-

wards

wards in the way of vertue. These shall not attaine to the true liberty of a pure hart, nor to the grace of my diuine familiarity, vnlesse they first make an entire resignation, and offer themselues a daily sacrifice vnto me. For without this can neuer be obtained the vnion with me, wherewith my Saints enioy me.

3. I haue often said vnto thee, and now againe I say the same: For-
 sake thy selfe, resigne thy selfe, and thou shalt enioy internal peace. Giue all for all, seeke nothing, require nothing, repose thy selfe purely and with a full confidence in me, and I will giue my selfe vnto thee, & darknes shall not couer thee. Let this be thy whole endeauour, let this be thy praier, let this be thy desire, that casting of all propriety, thou maist all naked follow thy naked Saviour Iesus: and dying to thy selfe, maist liue eternally to me. Then thal vaine fantasies, euill perturbations, and all superfluous cares fly away: then shall immoderate feare leaue thee, & inordinate loue shall dye.

Matt. 16.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

*Of good government in outward things,
and of recourse to God in
dangers.*

† Our
Lord.

SONNE [†], thou oughtest with all diligence to procure, that in every place and action, or externall businesse, thou be inwardly free, & maister of thy selfe, & that all things be vnder thy disposition, and thou not subiect to them: that thou maist be Lord & Maister of thy actions, not a seruant or a hireling, but rather a freeman, and a true Hebrew, belonging to the lot and freedome of the sones of God, who put the things that are present vnder their feet, & place their thoughts on that which is eternall: who looke on transitory things with the left eye, and with the right do behould the thinges of heauen: who suffer not themselves to be drawne to cleaue vnto them, but rather dispose and vse them, as they are ordained by God, and appointed by the Creatour of all, who
hath

bath left nothing in his creatures without due order.

2. If thou remayne firme and stedfast in all euent, and doest not weigh by the outward apparence, nor with a carnall eye, the things which thou seest & hearest; but presently in every occasion doest enter with Moyse into the Tabernacle to aske counsell of our Lord, thou shalt sometimes heare the diuine and celestiall oracle, and shalt returne instructed of many things both present and to come. Moyse had alwaies recourse to the Tabernacle for the deciding of all doubts & obscure questions, and fled to the help of prayer, for the remedy of the iniquity and dangers of men. So oughtest thou in like maner to fly to the closet of thy hart, earnestly crauing the diuine fauour. For the Scripture testifieth, that therefore was Iosue & the children of Israel deceaued by the Gabaonites, because they consulted not first with God, but giuing too lightly credit to fayre wordes were deluded with counterfait piety.

Exod. 33.

Iosue 9.

CHAP. XXXIX.

*That a man be not ouer earnest
in his affaires.*

† Our
Lord .

* The
Seruant .

† Our
Lord .

SONNE, † alwaies commit thy
cause to me, I will dispoſe well
of it in due time : expect my ordina-
tion, and thou ſhalt find it wil be for
thy good. Lord, * I do moſt willing-
ly commit all vnto thee, for my care
can profit little. O that I cleaued not
too much to future euent, but offe-
red my ſelfe with all readineſſe of
mind to thy diuine pleaſure !

2. Sonne, † oftentimes a man
doth earneſtly labour for that which
he deſireth : and when he hath gottē
it, he beginneth to be of another
mind, and not to eſteeme ſo much
of it, as before he did : for mans af-
fections do not long continue fixed
on one thing, but do paſſe from one
to another. It is therefore a matter,
not of leaſt moment, to forſake our
ſelues even in the leaſt things.

3. The true ſpiritual profit of
man, conſiſteth in denying and for-
ſaking

saking of himselfe; and he that is resigned, liueth in great freedom and security. But the ancient enemy, who alwaies laboureth to withstand the seruants of God, omitteth at no time his wonted temptations, but day and night lieth still in waite, to cast the vniuersary, if he can, into the snare of deceit. Watch therefore & pray, saith our Lord, that you enter not into temptation.

1. Pet. 5.

Matt. 26.

CHAP. XL.

That man hath no good of himselfe, nor anything whercof he can glory.

LORD, * what is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the sonne of man, that thou vouchsafest to visit him? What hath man deserued that thou shouldest giue him thy grace? Lord, what cause haue I to complaine, if thou forsake me? Or if thou doest not that which I desire, what can I iustly say against it? Surely, this I may truely thinke and say: Lord, I am nothing, I can do nothing, I haue nothing that is good

* The
Seruant.
Psalm. 8.

of my selfe: but in all thinges I do
fayle, and am defectiue, and doe
euer tend to nothing: and vnlesse
thou help me, and doest interiously
instruct me, I become cold, and am
dissolued.

Ps. 101.

2. But thou, o Lord, art alwaies
the same, and endurest for euer, al-
waies good, iust, and holy, doing
all things well, iustly, and holily,
and disposing all thinges with wis-
dome. But I that am more incli-
ned to fall, then to goe forwardes,
doe neuer continue in one estate: for
seauen different tymes are changed
ouer me, yet doth it soone turne to
the better, when it so pleaseth thee,
& when thou vouchsafest to stretch
forth thy helping hand. For thou a-
lone canst help me without the fa-
uour of man, and so strengthen me,
that my countenance shall be no more
changed, but my hart shalbe con-
uerted, and rest in thee alone.

3. Wherefore if I could once
perfectly forsake all humane comfort,
either for the loue of deuotion, or
for mine owne necessitie, which in-
forceth me to seeke after thee (for

none

none els can comfort me) then might I well hope in thy grace, and reioyce in the gift of new consolation.

4. Thanks be vnto thee, from whence all proceedeth, as often as it goeth well with me: but I am meere vanitie, and nothing before thee, an vnconstant and weake man. Whereof then can I glory? Or why do I desire to be esteemed of? Is it not of nothing? And this is most vayne. Truly vaine glory is an euill plague & very great vanity: because it draweth from true glory, & robbeth the soule of heavenly grace. For whilst a man pleaseth himselfe, he displeaseth thee: whilst he gapeth after the praise of men, he is depriued of true vertue.

5. But true glory, & holy exultation, and ioy, is for a man to glory in thee, and not in himselfe: to reioyce in thy name, and not in his owne vertue, nor to delight in any creature, but for thee. Praised be thy name, not mine: magnified be thy worke, not mine: let thy holy name be for ever blessed, but to me let no part of mens praises be giuen.

Abac. 3.

Psal. 112.
& 113.

Thou art my glory, thou art the ioy of my hart. In thee will I glory and reioice all the day: but for my selfe I will not ioy, but in my infirmities.

Ioan. 5.

6. Let the lewes seeke the glorie, which one man giueth to another: I will desire this, which is from God alone. For all humane glory, all temporall honour, all worldly highnesse, compared to thy eternall glory, is vanity and folly. O my truth, my mercy, my God, most Blessed Trinity, to thee alone be all praise, honour, vertue, and glory for all eternity.

CHAP. XLI.

*Of the contempt of all temporall
honours.*

† Our
Lord.

* The
Seruant.

SONNE, † trouble not thy selfe, if thou seest others honoured and aduanced, and thy self contemned and debased. Lift vp thy hart vnto me in heauen, and the contempt of men in earth will not grieue thee. Lord, * we are blind, and quickly seduced with vanity. If

I looke well into my selfe, I cannot say, that any creature hath done me wrong, and therefore I cannot iustly complaine of thee.

2. But because I haue often and grieuously sinned against thee, all creaturs do iustly take armes against me: for shame and contempt is due vnto me, but vnto thee praise, honour, and glory. And vnlesse I do so prepare my selfe, that I be willing, & do reioice to be despised and forsaken of all creatures, & to be esteemed nothing at all, I cannot obtaine internall strength and peace, nor be spiritually enlightned, nor wholly vnitied vnto thee.

CHAP. XLII.

That our peace is not to be placed in men.

Sonne,† if the peace thou hast with any, be grounded on the opinion which thou hast of him, or on the contentment thou receauest in his company, thou shalt euer be vnconstant and subiect to disquiet: but

† Our Lord.

if thou haue recourse vnto the euery-
 liuing and eternall Truth, a friend
 going from thee or dying shall not
 grieue thee. The loue of thy friend
 ought to rest in me, and for me is he
 to be beloued, whosoever he be,
 whom thou thinkest well of, and is
 verily deare vnto thee in this life.
 No friendship can auaille, or continue
 without me; neither is the loue true
 and pure, which they haue, whose
 hartes are not ioyned together by
 me. Thou oughtest to be so dead to
 such affections of beloued friends,
 that (forasmuch as appertaineth vn-
 to thee) thou shouldest wish to be
 without all company of men. Man
 approacheth so much the neerer vn-
 to God, how much the further off he
 departeth from all earthly comfort:
 so much the higher also he ascendeth
 vnto God, by how much lower he
 descendeth into himselfe, and how
 much the baser he is in his owne cō-
 ceipt.

2. But he that attributeth any
 good vnto himselfe, hindreth the
 comming of Gods grace into him.
 For the grace of the holy Ghost euer

seeketh

seeketh an humble hart. If thou couldst perfectly annihilate thy self, & purge thy self of all created loue, then should there flow into thee great aboundance of my grace. When thou castest thy eyes on creatures, the sight of thy Creatour is taken frō thee. Learne to ouercome thy selfe in al things, for the loue of thy Creatour; and then shalt thou be able to attaine to heavenly knowledg. How little soeuer it be, if it be inordinate-ly loued and regarded, it defileth the soule, and hindreth the enioying of the chiefest good.

CHAP. XLIII.

Against vaine and secular knowledge.

SONNE,† let not the fair speeches and subtile sayings of men moue thee. For the Kingdome of God consisteth not in words, but in vertue. Obserue well the wordes which I speake; for they inflame the hart, and enlighten the mind, induce cōpanction, and bring sundry comforts. Do thou neuer read to shew
thy

† Our
Lord.
1. Cor. 4.

thy selfe learned or wise: but labour to mortifie thy vices, for that will profit thee more, then the knowledg of many hard and difficult questiōs.

2. When thou shalt haue read & knowne many things, thou ough test enen to returne to one begin-
ning. I am he, that teacheth man all knowledg: and do giue to little ones a more cleare vnderstanding, then can be taught by man. He therfore, to whome I speake, shall quickly be wise, and shall profit much in spirit. Woe be to them, that inquire many curious things of men, and do little desire to know the way how to serue me. The time will come, when the Maister of Maisters shal appeare, Christ the Lord of Angells, to heare the lessons of all, that is, to examine the consciences of euery one: and then he will search Hierusalem with a candle, and the hidden things of darkenesse shall be laid open, and the inuentions of tongues shall be silent.

3. I am he that in an instant do raise vp the humble mind, to vnderstand more reasons of the euerlasting

truth

Soph. 1.
1. Cor. 4.

truth, then can be gotten by ten yeares study in schools. I teach without noise of words, without confusion of opinions, without ambition of honour, without contention of arguments. I am he that teacheth to despise earthly things, to loath things present, to seeke the euerlasting, to delight in the things that are eternal, to fly honours, to suffer scandalls, to place all hope in me, to desire nothing out of me, and aboue all things feruently to loue me.

4. For one by louing me entirely, learned diuine things, and spake wonders: he profited more in forsaking all things, then in studying subtilties. To some I speake ordinary things, to others, things more especiall: to some I appeare sweetly by signes and figures, but to some I reueale mysteries with much light. The voice of books is one, but it teacheth not all men alike. For I am the internal teacher, I am the Truth, the searcher of the hart, the vnderstander of thoughts, the setter forwards of good works, distributing to euery one according to my will.

CHAP. XLIIII.

*Of not drawing outward things
to our selues.*

† Our
Lord.

SONNE, † in many things thou
soughtest to be ignorant, and e-
steeme thy selfe as dead vpon earth;
& as one to whom the whole world
is crucified. Thou must also passe o-
uer many things with a deate care,
and rather thinke of that, which ap-
pertaineth to thy peace. It is more
profitable to turne thine eyes from
the sight of vnpleasing things, and to
leauē vnto euery one his owne opi-
nion, then to strīue with contentious
wordes. If thou standest well with
God, and considerest his iudgments,
thou shalt the more easily yield to
the will of others.

* The
Seruant

2. O * Lord, to what an estate are
we come! Behold, we bewaile a tem-
porall losse, and for a litle gaine we
toyle and spare no labour, & the spiri-
tuall damage of our soule is forgot-
te, & hardly at length called to mind.
That which litle or nothing profi-
teth,

teth, is alwaies remembred, and that which is chiefly necessary, is negligently passed ouer, because mans nature carrieth him to externall things: & vnlesse he quickly returne vnto himselfe, he lyeth drowned in them with delight.

CHAP. XLV.

That credit is not to be giuen to all men: and how prone man is to offend in words.

HELP me * Lord, in my tribulation, for vaine is the defence of man. How often haue I bene deceaued, finding want of faith, where I thought it sure? And how often haue I found faith, where I least expected it? It is vaine therefore to trust in men: but the safety of the iust, o Lord, is in thee. Blessed be thou my God, in all thinges that befall vs. We are weake and inconstant, quickly deceaued, and soone changed.

2. Who is he, that is able so warily to keep himselfe, that he neuer

fall

* The
Seruant.

Psal. 59.

Provl. 10.

fall into any deceit or doubt? But he that trusteth in thee, o Lord, and seeketh thee with a pure hart, doth not easily fall; and if he fall into any tribulation, be he neuer so much inthralled, yet he shal quickly be deliuered or cōforted by thee. For thou wilt not forsake him for euer that trusteth in thee. The friend is rare to be found, that continueth faithfull in his freinds distresse, but thou, o Lord, thou alone art faithfull at all times, and there is none like vnto thee.

3. O how wise was that holy soule that said: My mind is firmly setled and grounded in Christ! If it were so with me, then would not humane feare so easily trouble me, nor words moue me. Who can foresee all things? Who is able to beware beforehand of future euills? If things euen foreseene do oftentimes hurt vs, how can things vnlooked for choose but wound vs grievously? But why did I not prouide better for my selfe, miserable wretch? Why also haue I so easily giuen credit to others? But alas we are men, and God kno-

weth

weth, weake & fraile men, although by many we are reputed and called Angels. To whome shall I giue credit Lord? to whome but to thee? Thou art the truth that neither dost deceaue, nor canst be deceaued. And on the other side, euery man is a liar, weake, vnconstant, and subject to fall, especially in words: and therefore we must not easily giue credit euen to that, which in outward shew seemeth at the first a certaine truth.

4. O with how great wisdom hast thou warned vs to take heed of men! and because the enemies of man are his familiar and domestical acquaintance, not to trust, if one should say: Behould heere, or behould there. I am taught to my cost, and I would to God I might thereby increase my care, and not my folly. Bewary, saith one, be wary, keep vnto thy selfe what I tell thee: and whilst I hould my peace, and think it is secret, he cannot keep that secret, which he desired should be secret, but presently discloseth me and himselfe, and goeth his way. From

Matt. 7.

such tales, and such improuident people, protect me Lord, that I fall not into their hands, nor euer commit such errors, Giue me grace my God to obserue truth, and constancy in my words, and remove far from me a deceitfull tongue. What I am not willing to suffer, I ought by all meanes to auoid.

Prou. 25.

Esa. 24.

5. O how good & quiet a thing it is to be silent, and not to talke of others, nor to belieue all that is said, nor easily to report what we haue heard; to lay ones self open to few; alwayes to seeke after thee, the behoulder of the hart; not to be carried about with euery wind of wordes, but to desire that all thinges both within & without, be accomplished according to thy will and pleasure. How secure is it for the keeping of heauenly grace, to fly the sight of men? And not to seeke those things, that seeme to cause admiration abroad, but to follow that with all diligence, which bringeth amendment of life, and increase of seruour.

6. To how many hath vertue, knowne and ouer hastily commen-

ded

ded bene hurtfull? How profitable hath grace bene, kept with silence in this mortall life, which is nothing but a perpetuall temptation, and a warfare?

CHAP. XLVI.

*Of putting our trust in God, when
euill words arise.*

SONNE, † be constant, and put thy trust in me. For what are wordes, but wordes? They passe through the ayre, but hurt not. If thou be guiltie, determine willingly to amend thy selfe: if thou be innocent, resolue to suffer this willingly, at least for God. It is a small matter to suffer sometimes a few words, if thou hast not yet the courage to endure stripes. And why do small matters go to thy hart, but for that thou art yet carnall, and regardest men more then thou oughtest? Because thou art afraid to be despised, therefore thou wilt not be reprehended for thy faults, and therefore seekest shaddowes of excuses.

† Our
Lord.

Psal. 36.

144 THE FOLLOWING

2. But looke better into thy self and thou shalt see, that the world yet liueth in thee, and a vaine desire to please men. For when thou refuseth to be humbled, & reprov'd for thy faults, it is surely euident, that thou art neither truly humble, nor dead to the world, nor the world perfectly crucified to thee. But give diligent eare to my words, and thou shalt little respect ten thousand wordes spoken by men. Behould, it al should be spoken against thee that could be most maliciously inuented, what would it hurt thee, if thou sufferdest it to passe, & madest no reckoning at all of it? Could al those words pluck as much as one haire from thy head?

Matt. 10.
Luc. 11.

3. But he that hath not his heart within him, nor God before his eyes is easily moued with euery little dispraise, when as he that trusteth in me, and confideth not in his owne iudgement, shall be free from humane feares. For I am the Iudge and the discerner of all secrets. I know how the matter passed, I know him that offereth the iniury, and him that suffereth it. From me hath this word

Psalm 7.

pro-

proceeded: this hath happened by my permissiō, that out of many harts thoughts may be reuealed. I shall iudge the guilty & the innocent, but by a secret iudgmēt I would beforehand try them both.

Luc. 2.

4. The testimony of men oftentimes deceaueth: my iudgment is alwaies true, it shall stand, and not be ouerthrowne. It is cōmonly hidden and secret, and not known in euery thing but to few: notwithstanding it neuer erreth, neither can it erre, although to the eyes of the foolish it seemes not right. Men ought therefore to returne to me in euery iudgment, and not to stand in their owne opinions. For the iust man will not be troubled, whatsoeuer happeneth vnto him for God: and if any thing be wrongfully brought forth against him, he will not much care, neither will he vainely be glad, if by others he be with reaso excused. For he considereth that I am he, that searcheth the hart & reines, & do iudg, not according to the outward face, nor humane apparēce. For that is oftentimes found culpable in my sight, that in

Prou. 12.

Plal. 7.

the iudgment of men is commendable.

* The
Seryant

1. Cor. 4.

Pf. 142.

5. O Lord * my God, the iust Iudge, strong & patient, thou knowest the frailty and perversity of man, be thou my strength, & all my trust, for mine owne conscience sufficeth me not. Thou knowest that which I cannot reach vnto, and therefore in every reprehension I ought to haue submitted my selfe, & to haue borne it patiently: vouchsafe mercifully to pardon me, as often as I haue fayled heerin, and giue me againe grace of greater sufferance. For thy bountifull mercy is more auaylable to me for the obtrayning of pardon, then my conceaued iustice for the defence of my hidden conscience. Although my conscience accuse me not, yet I cannot hereby iustifie my selfe; for if thy mercy be away, no man liuing shalbe iustified in thy sight.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLVII.

That all grievous thinges are to be endured for life everlasting.

SONNE, † let not the paines dismay thee which thou hast undertaken for me, neither be thou discōforted for the tribulatiōs which do befall thee; but let my promise strengthen and comfort thee in all e-vents. I am able to reward thee a-bove all measure. Thou shalt not long toile here, nor alwayes be oppressed with griefe. Attend a while, and thou shalt see a speedy end of thy euills. There will come an houre when all labour and trouble shall cease. Little and short is all that passeth away with time.

† Our Lord.

2. Doe as thou doest, labour faithfully in my vineyard, I will be thy reward. Write, read, sing, mourne, obserue silence, pray, suffer crosses māfully: life everlasting is worthy of all these & greater cōbats. Peace shall come in the day which is knowne vnto our Lord, & it shall

M tt. 25.

Rom. 7.

Psal. 119.

Sap. 3. &
5.

not be day nor night, to wit, of this time, but euermlasting light, infinite brightnesse, stedfast peace, and secure rest. Then thou shalt not say, Who shall deliuer me from the body of this death? nor cry, Wo be vnto me, for that my dwelling in a strange countrey is prolonged! For death shall be throwne downe; and health shall be without decay, no anxiety, blessed ioy, sweet and glorious company.

3. O if thou hadst seene the euermlasting crowns of the Saints in heauē, and with how great glory they now reioyce who in times past were contemptible to this world, and esteemed vnworthy of life it selfe: truly thou wouldest presently humble thy selfe euen vnto the earth: & wouldest rather seek to be vnder the feet of all, then to haue cōmand, so much as ouer one: neither wouldest thou desire pleasant daies of this life, but rather reioyce to be afflicted for God, and esteeme it thy greatest gaine to be reputed as nothing amongst men.

4. O if thou hadst a feeling of these things, and didst suffer them to

enter

enter into the depth of thy hart, how durst thou so much as once to complaine! Are not al paineful labours to be endured for euerlasting life? It is no smal matter to leese or to gain the Kingdome of heauen. Lift vp thine eyes therfore vnto heauen: behould I, and all my Saints with me, who in this world had great conflicts, do now reioyce, now are comforted, now are secure, now do rest, and shall remaine with me euerlastingly in the Kingdome of my Father.

CHAP. XLVIII.

Of the euerlasting day, and shortnesse of this life.

O most * blessed mansion of the heauenly Citty! o most cleare day of eternity, which night obscureth not, but the highest truth euer enlightneth, day euer pleasant, euer secure, and neuer changing into contrary state! O that, that day would once appeare, and all these temporall things were at an end! To the Saints it shineth glistering with euerlasting

* The
Seruant.

Apoc. 21.

Qs

bright-

brightnesse, but to those that are Pilgrimes vpon earth, it appeareth only a far off, and as it were through a glasse.

Iob. 7.

2. The inhabitants of heaven doe know how ioyfull that day is: but the banished children of Eve bewaile the bitterness and tediousnes of this. The daies of this life are short and euill, full of sorrow & anguish, where man is defiled with many finnes, incumbred with many passions, disquieted with many feares, filled with many cares, distracted with many curiosities, intangled with many vanities, compassed about with many errors, worne away with many labours, vexed with temptations, weakned with delights, tormented with want.

Rom. 7.

Ps. 70.

3. O when shall these euills be at an end! When shall I be deliuered from the miserable bondage of sin! When shall I thinke, o Lord of thee alone! When shall I perfectly reioyce in thee! When shall I be free from all impediments in true liberty, without all griefe of mind & body! When shall I haue firme peace, peace

secure

secure and without trouble, peace within and without, peace every way assured! O good Iesu, when shall I stand to behold thee! When shall I contemplate the glory of thy Kingdome! When wilt thou be vnto me all in all things! O when shall I be with thee in thy Kingdome, which thou hast prepared for thy beloued, from before all worldes! I am left a poore and banished man in the land of mine enemies, where there are daily warres, and great misfortunes.

4. Comfort my banishment, assuage my sorrow: for my whole desire sendeth vp sighes vnto thee. For all is burdensome to me, whatsoever this world offereth for my comfort. I desire familiarly to enioy thee, but I cannot attaine vnto it. I would gladly fixe my hart to the things of heauen, but temporall cares and vnmortified passions weigh me down. In mind I would be aboue all things, but to my flesh I am inforced to be subiect against my will. Thus unhappy man that I am, I fight against my selfe, and am become grieuous to my selfe, whilst my spirit seeketh

Rom. 7.
& 8.

after

after the things that are aboue , and my flesh that which is below .

PSAL. 70.

5. O what do I inwardly suffer, when in mind I consider heavenly things, and presently in my praiers a multitude of fleshly fantasies present themselues before me ! My God, be not farre from me , depart not in thy wrath from thy seruant. Cast forth thy lightning, and disperse them: send out thy darts, and breake all the fantasies of my enemy. Gather my senses together vnto thee, make me forget the things of this world: grant me grace to cast away speedily the fantasies of vices: Succour me, o euerlasting truth, that no vanity may moue me. Come heavenly sweetnesse, and let all impurity fly from thy face. Pardon me also, and mercifully forgive me as often as I think vpon any thing els besides thee in praier. I truly confesse, that I am wont to be subiect to many distractions: for oftentimes I am not there, where I do corporally stand, or sit, but rather there, whither my thoughts do carry me. Where my thought is, there am I: there is of-

ten times

tentimes my thought, where my affection is. That quickly occurreth vnto me, which is naturally delightful, and by custome pleasing.

6. And for this cause, thou that art truth it selfe, hast plainly said: Where thy treasure is, there is also thy hart. If I loue heauen, I willingly think of heauenly things. If I loue the world, I reioyce at the felicity of the world, and grieue for the aduersity therof. If I loue the flesh, I imagine oftentimes those things, that are pleasing to the flesh: if I loue the spirit, I delight to think of spirituall things. For whatsoever I loue, thereof do I willingly speake, and heare, and carry home with me the formes and representations therof. O blessed is that man, that for thee, o Lord, forsaketh all creatures; that violently resisteth nature, and out of the seruour of spirit crucifieth the concupiscences of the flesh: that with a cleare conscience he may offer sincere praiers vnto thee, & be worthy of the cōpany of the angelical quiers, all earthly things outwardly and inwardly being excluded.

Matt. 6.

CHAP. XLIX.

*Of the desire of euerlasting life, & how
great rewards are promised to
those that fight valiantly.*

† Our
Lord.

SONNE,† when thou perceau-
est the desire of euerlasting blis-
to be giuen thee from aboue, & de-
sirest to depart out of the Tabernacle
of this body, that thou maist with-
out shadow of any enterchange be-
hould my light; open thy hart, and
receaue this holy inspiratiō with thy
whole desire. Giue great thanks to
the heauenly goodnesse, that dealeth
with thee so fauourably, visiteth
thee mercifully, stirreth thee vp fer-
uently, houldeth thee vp power-
fully, least through thine owne
weight thou fall downe to the vani-
ties of the earth. Neither doest thou
obtaine this by thine owne thought
or endeauour, but by the only fa-
uour of heauenly grace and diuine
boūty, that thou maist profit in ver-
tue, and obtaine greater humility,
and prepare thy selfe to future bat-
tailes,

tales, and endeavour to cleave vnto me with the whole affectio of thy hart, and serue me with a feruent desire.

2. Sonne, fire often burneth, but the flame ascēdeth not vp without smoke: so likewise the desires of some men are earnestly carried to heavenly things, & yet they are not free from temptation of carnall affection: and therefore it is not altogether purely for the honour of God that which they so earnestly request of him. Such is also oftentimes thy desire, which with such importunity thou presentest vnto me. For that is not pure and perfect, which is infected and defiled with the loue of thine owne proper commodity and interest.

3. Aske not that which is delightful and profitable to thee, but that which is gratefull to me, and appertaineth to my honour, for if thou iudget aright, thou oughtest to preferre and follow my appointment, rather then thine owne desire, or any desired thing. I know thy desire, and haue heard thy often grones.

Now

Now thou wouldest be in the freedom of the glory of the Sonnes of God: now doth the euerlasting habitation, & the heavenly Countrey full of ioy delight thee, but this houre is not yet come: it is yet another time, to wit, of warre, time of labour and triall. Thou desirest to be filled with the chiefeſt good, but thou canst not attaine it for the present. I am he, saith our Lord, expect vntill the Kingdome of God doth come.

Iob. 7.

4. Thou art yet to be tryed vpon earth, and to be exercised in many things. Comfort shall be sometimes giuen thee, but aboudant fulnestherof shall not be granted. Take courage therfore, and be constant as well in doing, as in suffering things contrary to nature. Thou oughtest to put on a new man, and to be changed into another. Thou must oftentimes do that which thou wouldest not, and leaue vndone that thou wouldest do. That which is pleasing to others, shall go well forwards, that which thou wishest, shall not speed. That which others say, shall

Iosue 1.

Eph. 4.

be

be heard, what thou saist shall be nothing regarded. Others shall aske, & shall receaue, thou shalt aske and not obtaine.

5. Others shall be great in the praises of men, but of thee there shall be no speach; to others this or that shall be committed, but thou shalt be accompted fit for nothing. At this nature will sometimes repine, and it is much if thou endurest it with silence. In these and such like, a faithfull seruant of our Lord is wont to be tryed, how he can deny and ouercome himselfe in all things. There is scarce any thing, wherein thou hast such need to mortifie thy selfe, as in seeing and suffering those things that are contrary to thy will, especially when that is commanded, which seemeth vnto thee inconuenient, or to little purpose. And for that thou being placed vnder authority, darest not resist a higher power, therefore it seemeth hard vnto thee, to walke at the becke of another, & to leaue wholly thine owne opinion.

6. But consider, Sonne, the fruit

R

of

of these labours, the end neere at hand, & the reward aboue all measure, and thou shalt receaue no griefe therby, but great comfort of thy patience. For in regard of that little of thy will, which now thou willingly forsakest, thou shalt alwaies haue thy will in heaven. There thou shalt haue all that thou wilt, or canst desire: there thou shalt enioy all good without feare of loosing it, there shall thy will be euer one with me; it shall desire nothing, strange or priuate: there no man shall withstand thee, no man complaine of thee, no man hinder thee, nothing come against thee: but all things desired shall be there togeather present, and delight thy whole desire, and fulfill it to the highest degree: there I will giue thee glory for the reproach which heere thou sufferedst, a garment of praise for former griefe, for the lowest place, a seat of an everlasting Kingdome: there shall the fruite of obedience appeare, the labour of penance reioyce, & humble subiection shalbe gloriously crowned.

7. Now therfore bow thy selfe

with

with great humility vnder the hands of all, and regard not who said, or commaunded this; but take great heed, that whether thy Superiour, or thy Inferiour, or thine equall require any thing of thee, or doe insinuate their desire, thou take it all in good part, and endeavour to fulfill it with a sincere intention. Let one seeke this, another that, let him glory in this, the other in that, and be praised a thousand thousand times; but do thou neither reioyce in this, nor in that, but in the contempt of thy selfe, and in my pleasure and honour alone. This art thou to wish, that whether by life or death, God may be alwaies glorified in thee.

C H A P. I.

How a desolate person ought to offer himselfe into the hands of God.

LORD God, * Holy Father, thy holy name be now and for ever blessed; because as thou wilt, so is it done, and what thou doest, is good. Let thy seruant reioyce in thee, not

* The
Seruant

1. Cor. 4.

Ps. 37.

in himselfe, nor any thing els, for thou alone art the true gladnes, thou art my hope and my crown, thou art my ioy and my honour, o Lord. What hath thy seruant, but what he hath receaued from thee, euen without any desert of his? Thine is al that thou hast giuen, & whatsoever thou hast made. I am poore, and in labours from my youth: and sometimes my soule is heauy euen vnto teares, sometimes also it is troubled in it self, by reason of passions which rise against her.

2. I desire the ioy of peace, I craue the peace of thy children that are fed by thee in the light of cōfort. If thou giue peace, if thou infuse holy ioy, the soule of thy seruāt shal be full of heauenly sweetnes, and shall become deuout in thy praise, but if thou withdraw thy selfe, as very often thou art wont, he will not be able to runne the waies of thy commandements, but rather he boweth his knees, and knocketh his breast, for that it is not with him, as it was yesterday, and the day before, when thy light thined vpon his head, and

he

he was protected vnder the shadow of thy wings, from the temptations which violently assailed him

3. O righteous Father, and euer to be praised, the houre is come, that thy seruant is to be proued! Behold Father, it is fit, that in this houre thy seruant suffer something for thee. O Father worthy of eternall honour, the houre is come, which from all eternity thou didest foreknow should come: that for a short time thy seruant should outwardly be oppressed, but inwardly liue for euer with thee: he should be a little despised, and humbled, and made as an abiect in the sight of men, and much afflicted with passions & infirmities, that he may rise againe with thee, in the rising of new light, and be clarified in heauen. Holy Father, thou hast so appointed it, and wilt haue it so: and this is fulfilled which thy selfe hast commanded.

4. It is a grace and a fauour to thy friend to suffer, and to be afflicted in the world for the loue of thee, how often soeuer, and by whomsoever thou permittest it to

Ps. 118.

fall vpon him. Without thy counsell and prouidence, and without cause nothing is done in earth. It is good for me, Lord, that thou hast humbled me, that I may learne thy righteous iudgments, and cast away all haughtines of hart & presumptio. It is profitable to me, that shame hath conered my face, that I may rather seeke to thee for comfort, then to men. I haue learned also heerby to dread thy inscrutable iudgment, that afflicteth the iust with the wicked, but not without equity and iustice.

Tob. 13.

Psal. 17.

5. I giue thee thanks, that thou hast not spared my sinnes, but hast worne me away with bitter stripes, inflicting sorrowes, & sending griefs within and without. There is none vnder heauen that can comfort me, but thou my Lord God, the heavenly Phisitian of soules, that strikest & healest, bringest into hell, and drawest out againe; let thy correction be vpon me, and let thy rod instruct me.

6. Behould beloued Father, I am in thy hands, I bow my selfe vnder the rod of thy correction: let my

neck

neck and shoulders feele the stripes of thy chastisement, that my crookednesse may be conformed to thy will. Make me a deuout & humble disciple of thine, as thou art wont well to do, that I may be ready at euery beck of thy diuine pleasure. I commend my selfe and all mine vnto thee to be corrected. It is better to be rebuked heere, then hereafter. Thou knowest all and euery thing, and there is nothing hidden in the conscience of man, which can be hidden from thee. Before things are done, thou knowest that they will happen, and hast no need that any should teach thee, or admonish thee of those things, which are done on earth. Thou knowest what is expedient for my good, and how much tribulation is fit for purging the rust of my sinnes. Do with me according to thy desired pleasure, and despise not my sinfull life, better and more clearly knowne to none then to thee alone.

7. Graunt me, Lord, to know that which is to be knowne: to loue that, which is to be beloued: to praise

that which pleaseth thee most : to esteeme that which is precious vnto thee : to despise that which is contemptible in thy sight : suffer me not to iudge according to the sight of the exterior eyes , nor to giue sentence according to the hearing of the eares of ignorant men ; but to determine of visible and spirituall things with a true iudgment , & aboue all things euer to search after thy will and pleasure .

8. The senses of men are often deceaued in their iudgments , the louers of the world are also deceaued in louing only visible things . What is a man the better , for that he is esteemed great by man ? The deceitfull man deceaueth the deceitfull , the vaine the vaine , the blind deceaueth the blind , and one feeble likewise another , whilst he exalteth and praiseth him . For how much euerie one is in thy sight , so much he is , and no more , sayth humble S. Francis .

CHAP. LI.

*That a man ought to imploy himselfe
in workes of humility, when
force is wanting for high-
er exercises.*

SONNE, † thou art not able al-
waies to continue in the feruent
desire of vertue, nor to persist in the
high pitch of contēplation, but thou
must sometimes of necessity by rea-
son of originall corruption descend
to inferiour things, and beare the
burthen of this corruptible life euen
against thy will, and with irksome-
nes. As long as thou carriest a mor-
tall body, thou shalt feelee trouble
and heauines of hart. Thou oughtest
therefore in flesh oftentimes to be-
waile the burthen of flesh: for that
thou canst not alwaies perseuere in
spirituall exercises, and diuine con-
templation.

† Our
Lord.

2. It is then expedient for thee to
fly to humble and exterior works,
and to refresh thy selfe with good &
vertuous actions, to expect with a

firme confidence my comming, and heauenly visitation, to beare patiently thy banishment, and the drinesse of thy mind, till thou bee visited againe by me, and deliuered from all anxiety. For I will make thee forget thy former paines, and enioy inward quietnes. I wil lay open before thee the pleasant fieldes of holy Scripture, that with an enlarged hart thou maist begin to run the way of my commaundements. And thou shalt say, that the sufferings of this time are not condigne to the glory to come, that shall be revealed in vs.

Rom. 8.

CHAP. LII.

That a man ought not to esteeme himselfe unworthy of comfort, and to haue deserved stripes.

* The
Seruant.

I ORD, * I am not worthy of thy comfort, nor of any spirituall visitation, and therefore thou dealest iustly with me, when thou leauest me poore and desolate. For if I could shed teares like a sea, yett I were not worthy of thy comfort.

For

For (alas) I deserue nothing , but to be scourged and punished , in that I haue grieuously and often offended thee, and sinned in many things. All things therfore duely considered , I am not worthy euen of the least cōfort . But thou mild and mercifull God , who wilt not that thy workes do perish , to shew the riches of thy goodnesse in the vessels of mercy , euen beyond his desert , vouchsafest to comfort thy seruant aboue humane measure. For thy comforts are not like to the vaine words of men .

2. What haue I done , o Lord , that thou shouldst impart any heavenly comfort vnto me ? I remember not , that I haue euer done any good , but haue bene alwayes prone to sinne, and slouthfull in my amēdment . It is true , and I cannot deny it . If I should say otherwise , thou wouldest stand against me , & there would be none to defend me . What haue I deserved for my sinnes , but hell and euerlasting fire ? I confesse in the truth of my hart that I am worthy of all scorne and contempt , and it is vnfit that I should be remēbred

Iob . 9.

amongst

amongst thy deuout seruants . And although I be vnwilling to heare this, yet notwithstanding for the loue of truth, I will lay open my finnes against my selfe, that I may the better deserue to obtaine thy mercy .

Psal. 50.

Iob. 10.

1. What shall I say, being guilty, and full of confusion? I can vtter out of my mouth no other word but this: I haue sinned, Lord, I haue sinned, haue mercy on me: pardon me, suffer me a little, that I may bewaile my grieffe, before I go vnto the land of darknesse, and be covered with the shaddow of death. What doest thou require of a guilty & miserable sinner, but that he be contrite and sorrowfull, and do humble himselfe for his offences? In true contrition and humbleness of heart, is bred a hope of forgiveness, a troubled conscience is reconciled againe, grace lost is restored, man is defended from future wrath, and God and the penitent soule meet together in the holy kisse of peace.

Psal. 50.

4. Humble contrition for sinns is an acceptable sacrifice vnto thee, o Lord, saouring much sweeter in

thy

thy sight then burning frankincense. This is also the pleasant oyntment, which thou wouldest haue powred vpon thy sacred feet, for thou neuer despisest a contrite and humble hart. There is a place of refuge from the face of the wrath of our enemy: there is amended, and washed away whatsoeuer vncleane hath bene elsewhere gathered, and whatsoeuer is defiled.

Luc. 7.

Psalm 50.

CHAP. LIII.

*That the grace of God is not giuen
to those that saour of earthly
things.*

SONNE † my grace is precious, it suffereth not it selfe to be mingled with externall things, nor earthly comforts. Thou oughtest therefore to cast away all hinderances of grace, if thou desire to receaue the infusion thereof. Choose therefore a secret place to thy selfe, loue to liue alone with thy selfe, desire the conuersion of none: but rather powre out deuout prayers vnto God, that thou maist

† Our
Lord.

keep

Matt. 19.

keep thy mind compunct, and thy conscience pure. Esteeme the whole world as nothing: preferre my seruice before all outward things: for thou canst not attend vnto me, and be delighted also in transitory vanities, Thou oughtest to sequester thy selfe frō thy acquaintance & friends, & to keep thy mind depriued of all temporall cōfort. So the blessed Apostle Peter required, that the faithfull of Christ should keep themselues as strangers & Pilgrimes in this world.

1. Pet. 2.

2. . O how great a confidence shall he haue at the houre of death, whome no affection to any earthly thing detaineth in the world. But the weake mind is not yet capable of so retired a hart; neither doth the fleshly person vnderstand the freedome of a recollected mind. Notwithstanding if he will be truly spirituall, he ought to renounce as wel that which is farre off, as that which is neere vnto him, and to beware of no man more then of himselfe. If thou perfectly ouercome thy selfe, thou shalt with more ease subdue the rest. It is a glorious victory to triumph ouer

our

our selues. For he that keepeth himselfe subiect in such sort, that his sensualitie be subdued to reason, & reason in al things be obedient to me, he is truly a conquerour of himselfe, & Lord of the world.

3. If thou desire to mount vnto this height of perfection, thou must begin manfully, and set the axe to the root, that thou maist plucke vp and destroy thy hidden and inordinate inclination to thy selfe, and vnto all priuate and earthly good. Of this vice (that man too inordinately loueth himselfe.) almost all dependeth, whatsoeuer is wholly to be overcome: which being once overcome & subdued, there will presently ensue great peace and tranquillity. But for that few endeauour perfectly to die vnto themselves, & to forsake themselves wholly, therefore they remaine intangled in themselves, and cannot be lifted vp in spirit aboue themselves: but he that desireth to walke freely with me, it is necessary that he mortify all his inordinate affections, and not adhere vnto any creature by priuate loue.

CHAP. LIV.

*Of the different motions of Nature
and Grace.*

† Our
Lord.

SONNE, † marke diligently the motions of thine owne nature, and my grace, for in very contrary and secret manner these are moued, and can hardly be discerned but by him that is spirituall and inwardly enlightened. All men desire that which is good, and pretend some good in all their words and deeds, & therefore vnder pretence of good, many are deceaued. Nature is deceitfull and seduceth, intangleth, & deceaueth many, and alwaies proposeth her selfe for her end, but grace walketh with great sincerity, and auoideth all shew of euill, pretendeth not deceipts, & doth all things purely for God, in whome also she finally resteth.

2. Nature will not willingly dye, nor be kept in, nor overcome, nor be subiect to any, nor be subdued: but grace laboureth to mortifie

her

her selfe, resisteth sensuality, seeketh to be subiect, is willing to be overcome, and will not vse her owne liberty, she loueth to be kept vnder discipline, and desireth not to rule any, but alwaies to liue and remaine wholly subiect vnto God; and for God is ready humbly to bow vnto all men. Nature striueth for her owne commodity, and considereth what profit she may reape by another: but grace considereth not what is profitable and commodious vnto her selfe, but rather what is profitable to many. Nature willingly receaueth honour & reuerence: but grace faithfully attributeth all honour and glory vnto God.

3. Nature feareth shame and contempt, but grace reioyceth to suffer reproach for the name of Iesus. Nature loueth idlenes, and bodily rest, but grace cannot be idle, but willingly imbraceth labour. Nature seeketh to haue those things that be curious and precious, abhorreth that which is meane and base: but grace delighteth in plaine & hūble things, despiseth not course and meane, nor

refuseth to wear that which is old & torne Nature respecteth the things of this world, reioyceth at earthly gaine, sorroweth for losse, is moued with every little iniurious word; but grace thinketh on that, which is euerlasting, and cleaueth not to that which fadeth with time; she is not troubled with losse, nor exasperated with iniuries, for that she hath placed her treasure and ioy in heauen where nothing perissheth.

4. Nature is couetous, and doth more willingly receaue then giue, she loueth proper and priuate things; but grace is pittifull & liberrall to all, auoydeth singularity, is content with a little, thinketh it happier to giue, then to receaue. Nature inclineth to creatures, yieldeth to her owne flesh, followeth vanities, and listneth to discourses: but grace draweth vnto God, and seeketh after vertues, renounceth creatures, sheth the world, hateth the desires of the flesh, restraineth wandrings abroad, blusheth to be seene in publicke. Nature is willing to haue some outward comfort, wherein she may
delight

delight her senses, but grace seeketh comfort in God alone, and delighteth about all visible things in the highest good.

5. Nature worketh all for her owne gaine and profit, she can doe nothing freely, but for bestowed benefits: she hopeth to obtaine either that which is equall, or better, either praise or fauour, & coueteth to haue her workes & gifts much esteemed: but grace seeketh no temporal thing, nor asketh any other reward for her deserts then God alone, nor desireth more of temporall necessities, then what may serue her for the obtaining of euerlasting glory.

6. Nature rejoyceth to haue many friends, and kinstolkes, she glorieth of Noble birth and descent, pleaseth the powerfull, fawneth vpon the rich, applaudeth those that are like her selfe: but grace loueth her enemies, & is not puffed vp with multitude of friends, nor esteemeth place or birth, but where it is ioyned with greater vertue, she rather fauoureth the poore, then the rich, hath more compassion of the innocent,

then the powerfull, reioyceth in the simple, & respecteth not the deceptfull, exhorteth euer the good to labour for the better gifts, and by vertue to resemble the sonne of God. Nature quickly complaineth of any want and trouble: grace constantly suffereth all kind of need.

7. Nature turneth all things to her selfe; striueth and contendeth for her selfe: but grace reduceth all to God; frō whence originally they proceed: she ascribeth no good to her selfe; neither doth she arrogantly presume of her selfe: she contendeth not, nor preferreth her opinion before others, but in euery sense & vnderstanding submitteth her selfe vnto the eternall wisdom, and to the diuine iudgment. Nature coueteth to know secrets, and to heare newes; she will appeare abroad, and make prooue of many things by the experience of her owne senses, she desireth to be known, & to do those things, for which she may be praised and admired: but grace careth not for hearing newes, nor to vnderstand curious matters, for that all this

springeth from the ancient disorder of our corrupt nature, seing nothing that is new, is durable vpon earth. She teacheth therefore to reſtraine the ſenſes, to auoid vaine pleaſing, and oſtentatiō, humbly to hide thoſe things that are worthy of praiſe and admiration, and of euery thing and euery knowledg to ſeeke profitable fruite, and the praiſe and honour of God: ſhe will not haue her ſelfe nor hers publickly praiſed, but deſireth that God ſhould be bleſſed in his gifts, who of meere charity beſtoweth all things.

8. This grace is a ſupernaturall light, and a certaine ſpeciall gift of God, and the proper marke of the elect, and pledge of euerlaſting ſaluation, which liſteth vp a man from earthly baſeneſſe to loue things of bea- uen, & of a carnall maketh him a ſpirituall perſon. How much the more therefore nature is depreſſed and ſub- dued, ſo much the greater grace is in- fuſed, and the inward man daily by new viſitations more perfected ac- cording to the Image of God.

CHAP. LV.

Of the corruption of nature. & efficacy of diuine grace.

* The
Seruant

Gcn. 1.

Rom. 7.

MY God, * who of thy meere goodnes hast created me to thy Image and likenesse, graunt me this grace which thou hast shewed to be so great, and so necessary to saluation, that I may overcome my wicked nature, which draweth me to sinne, and to the losse of my soule. For I feele in my flesh the law of sin, contradicting the law of my mind, and leading me captiue, to obey sensualitie in many things: neither can I resist the passions therof, vnlesse thy holy grace feruently infused into my hart do assist me.

2. Thy grace o Lord, & great grace is needfull, that nature may be ouertome, which is ever prone to euill from her youth. For by Adam the first man, it falling & being corrupted by sinne, the penalty of this staine hath descended vpon all mankind, in such sort, that nature it selfe,

which

which by thee was created good, & without defect, is now accompted for vice, and for the infirmitie of a corrupted nature, for that the motiō therof left vnto it selfe, draweth to euill and abiect things. For the little force which remaineth, is like a certaine sparke, lying hidden in ashes. This is naturall reason it selfe, compassed about with great darknesse, still retayning power to discern good and euill, and the distance betweene true and false, although it be vnable to fulfill all, that it approueth and enioyeth not now the full light of truth, nor the former integritie of her affections.

3. Hence it is, my God, that according to my inward man I delight in thy law, knowing thy commandments to be good, iust, and holy, reprobuing also all euill and sinne, and do know that it is to be fled. But in my flesh I serue the law of sin, whilst I rather obey sensuality then reason. Hence it is, that I haue a will to do good, but know not how to performe it. For this cause I of ten purpose many good things, but for that

Rom. 7.

I want grace to help my infirmity, for a light resistance I go back, and faint. I know the way of perfectiō, and see cleerly inough what I ought to do, but pressed with the weight of mine owne corruption, I rise not vnto it.

Ioan. 13.

4. O Lord, how needfull is thy grace for me, to begin any good worke, to go forward, and to accomplish it. For without it I can do nothing, but in thee I can do all things, when thy grace doth comfort me. O heavenly grace, without which our owne merits are nothing, and no gifts of nature are to be esteemed. Arts, riches, beauty, & strength, wit, or eloquence are of no worth with thee, o Lord, without thy grace. For gifts of nature are cōmon to good & euil, but the peculiar gift of the elect is grace and loue, wher with being marked, they are esteemed worthy of euerlasting life. This grace so much excelleth, that neither the gift of prophesie, nor the working of miracles, nor any speculation, how high soeuer, is of any esteeme without it. Neither faith, nor

hope

hope, nor other vertues are acceptable vnto thee without charity and grace.

1. Cor. 13.

5. O most blessed grace, that makest the poore in spirit rich with vertues, and the rich in many blessings, humble in hart, come downe vnto me, replenish me in the morning with thy cōfort, least my soule should faint with wearines, and wither away with drinesse of mind. I beseech the Lord, that I may find grace in thy sight, for thy grace sufficeth, though other things that nature desireth be wanting. If I be tempted and vexed with many tribulations, I will not feare euils whilst thy grace is with me: she is my strength, she giueth aduise and help: she is stronger then all enemies, and wiser then all the wise.

Psal. 22.

6. Thy grace is the mistresse of truth, the teacher of discipline, the light of the hart, the solace in affliction: she driueth away sorrow, she expelleth feare, she is the nurse of deuotion, the bringer forth of teares. What am I without it, but a rotten peece of wood, and an vn-

profitable stalke only meet for the fire? Let thy graces therefore, Lord, alwaies preuent me, and follow me, and make me euer diligent in good workes, through Iesus Christ thy Sonne, Amen.

CHAP. LVI.

That we ought to deny our selues, and imitate Christ, by the Crosse.

† Our
Lord.

Ioan. 14.

SONNE,† looke how much thou canst go out of thy self, so much maist thou enter into me. As to be void of all desire of externall things, maketh inward peace; so the forsaking of our selues ioyneth vs internally to God. I will haue thee learne the perfect leauing of thy selfe vnto my will, without contradiction and complaint. Follow me, I am the way, the truth, and the life. Without the way there is no going, without truth there is no knowledge, without life there is no liuing. I am the way which thou oughtest to follow, the truth which thou oughtest to trust, the life for which

thou

thou oughtest to hope. I am the way which cannot lead amisse, the truth which cannot erre, the life which cannot end. I am a most strait way, a supreme truth, a true life, a blessed life, an increated life. If thou remaine in me, thou shalt know the truth, & truth shall deliuer thee. & thou shalt apprehend euerlasting life.

2. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commaundements: if thou wilt know the truth, believe me. If thou wilt be perfect, sell all. If thou wilt be my disciple, deny thy selfe. If thou wilt possesse a blessed life, despise this present life. If thou wilt be exalted in heauen, humble thy selfe vpon earth. If thou wilt raigne with me, beare the crosse with me. For only the seruants of the crosse find the way of blisse and true light.

3. Lord Iesus, * forasmuch as thy way is narrow, strait and contemptible vnto the world, graunt me grace to imitate thee in suffering willingly all worldly contempt. For the seruant is not greater then his Lord, nor the Disciple aboue his Maister. Let thy seruant be exercised

in

Matt. 19.

Luc. 9.

Ioan. 12.

Luc. 14.

* The
Seruant.

Matt. 7.

Luc. 6.

in thy holy life, for there is the health and the true sanctity of my soule: whatsoeuer I read or heare besides, doth not recreate or delight me fully.

† Our
Lord .

* The
Seruant .

4. Sonne, † now that thou knowest and hast read these things, happy shalt thou be, if thou fulfill them. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loueth me, and I will loue him, and will manifest my selfe vnto him, and will make him sit with me in the Kingdome of my Father. Lord * Iesus, as thou hast said and promised, so giue me grace to deserue, that it be fulfilled. I haue receaued the Crosse, I haue receaued it from thy hand, and I will beare it, and beare it till death, as thou hast laid it ypon me. Truly the life of a good religious person is the crosse, and it is a sure guide to heauen. It is now begunne, it is not lawfull to go back, neither is it fit to leaue that which I haue vndertaken.

5. Let vs then take courage my brethren, & go forwards together, Iesus will be with vs, for Iesus sake

we haue vndertaken this crosse : for the loue of Iesus let vs perseuere in the crosse . He will be our helper , who is our guide & forerunner. Behould our King goeth before vs, who also will fight for vs : let vs follow him cheerefully , let vs not be dismaied ; but be ready to dye with courage in the battaile, and let vs not blemish our glory by flying from the Crosse .

CHAP. LVII.

*That a man be not too much de-
jected, when he falleth into
some defects.*

SONNE, † patience and humi-
lity in time of aduersitie, are
more pleasing to me, then much cō-
fort and deuotion in prosperitie.
Why art thou grieved for euery lit-
tle trifle spoken & done against thee?
Although it had bene much more
thou oughtest not to haue bene mo-
ued. But now let it passe, it is not the
first that hath happened , nor any
new thing , neither shall it be the last,

† Our
Lord.

if

if thou liue long . Thou art cheerfull inough as long as no aduersitie occurreth . Thou canst giue good counsaile also, and canst strengthen others with thy words, but when any tribulation suddainly knocketh at thy doore, thou art destitute of counsell, and void of force . See therefore thy great frailty, which thou often procest in very small occasions . It is notwithstanding permitted for thy good, when these and such like occasions befall thee .

2. Put it out of thy hart the best thou canst, and if it touch thee, yet let it not deiect thee, nor trouble thee long : beare it at least patiently, if thou canst not ioyfully . Although thou be vnwilling to heare it, and feelest in thy hart some motion of disdain, yet repress thy selfe, and suffer no inordinate word to passe out of thy mouth, which may be a scandall to the weake . The storme which now is raised, shall quickly be appeased, and inward griete shall be asswaged by the returne of grace . I do yet liue, saith our Lord, and am ready to help thee, and to giue thee

Esa. 49.

greater

greater comfort then before, if thou put thy trust in me, and callest deuoutly vpon me.

3. Be more patient, & prepare thy selfe to greater suffering. All is not lost, if thou feele thy selfe often afflicted, or grievously tempted. Thou art a man, and not God: thou art flesh, not an Angell. How canst thou looke to continue euer in the same state of vertue, when an Angell in heauen hath fallen, and the first man in Paradise lost his standing? I am he that do giue healthfull comfort to them that mourne, and doe raise vp vnto my Godhead those that know their owne frailtie.

4. Lord,* blessed be thy sacred word, more sweet vnto my mouth then the hony, & the hony combe. What should I do in these my so great tribulations and anguill, vnlesse thou didst comfort me with thy holy, sweet, and heauenly speeches? What matter is it, how much, and what I suffer, so as I may at length attaine to the haue of blisse? Grant me a good end, graunt me a happy passage out of this world. Be mind-

Gen. 3.

* The
Seruant.
Pl. 118.

full

full of me, my God, and direct me the straight and ready way to the euerlasting Kingdome; Amen.

CHAP. LVIII.

*Of not searching into high matters,
& into the secret iudgments
of God.*

† Our
Lord.

Psal. 118.

Psal. 18.

SONNE; † beware thou dispute not of high matters; not of the secret iudgments of God, why this man is forsaken, and he assumed to so great grace: why also this man is so much afflicted, and he so greatly aduanced. These things exceed all humane power, neither can any reason or discourse of any man search out the iudgment of God. When the enemy therfore suggesteth these things vnto thee, or some enuious people demand the of thee, answer that of the Prophet: Thou art iust, O Lord, and thy iudgment is right. And againe: The iudgments of our Lord are true and iustified in themselves. My iudgments are to be feared, not to be discussed, for they are

such

such as cannot be comprehended by the vnderstanding of man.

2. In like manner I aduise thee not to inquire, nor dispute of the merits of the Saints, which of them is holier then the other, and which is greater in the Kingdome of heauen. These things oftentimes breed strife and vnprofitable contentions, they nourish also pride & vaine glory, from whence do vsually spring enuy and dissentions, whilst one will needs foolishly haue this Saint preferred, and the other, another. To desire to know and search out such things, is to no purpose, but to displease the Saints, of whome they speake. For I am not the God of dissension, but of peace, which peace consisteth rather in true humility, then in exalting our selues.

1. Tim. 2.

3. Some are carried with zeale of affection, to loue these, or those most, but this loue is rather humane then diuine. I haue made all the Saints, and haue giuen them grace: I haue made them partakers of my glory. I know the merits of euery one, I haue preuented them in the

T

benedi-

Ioan. 15.

benedictions of my sweetnesse . I foreknew my beloued before the beginning of the world. I chose the out of the world , they chose not me first . I called them by grace , I drew them by mercy , I led them through sundry temptations . I haue sent the great inward comforts , I haue giuen them perseverance , I haue crowned their patience .

Iac. 2.

Sap. 6.

4 . I know the first and last : I imbrace all with inestimable loue . I am to be praised in all my Saints , I am to be blessed about all things , & to be honoured in every one , whom I haue thus gloriously exalted , and predestinated without any precedēt merits of their owne . He therefore that contemneth one of the least of my Saints , honoureth not the greater , for that I made both the lesse and the greater . And he that dispraifeth any of my Saints , dispraifeth also me , and all the rest in the Kingdome of heauen , All are one by the band of Charity , they thinke the same , they will the same , and are all knit together in one perfect band of loue .

5 . But

5. But yet (which is much more high) they loue me more then themselves, and more then their owne merits. For being rauished about themselves, and drawne out of the affection of themselves, they tend wholly vnto the loue of me, in which also they rest, enioying me with vn-speakable glory. Nothing can put them backe, nothing presse them downe: for being full of euerlasting truth, they burne with the fire of vn- quenched charitie. Let therefore carnall and earthly men, that can affect no other but priuate ioyes, forbear to dispute of the state of Saints. They adde and take away according to their owne fancies, not as it pleaseth the euerlasting Truth.

6. There is in many great ignorance, specially in those that be slenderly enlightened, and these can seldom loue any with perfect spiritual loue. They are alwaies much drawne by a naturall affection, and humane friendship to this man or to that, & according to the experience they haue of themselves in their earthly affections, so they frame an imagination

of heavenly things . But there is an incomparable distance betweene the things, which the imperfect frame in their concepts, and those which illuminated persons do see by reuelatiō from aboue .

Eccli. 3.

7 . Beware therefore, my Sonne, that thou treat not curiously of these things, which exceed thy knowledg, but rather so apply thy endeaours, that thou maist at least haue the meanest place in the Kingdome of heauen . And if any one did know which of the Saints exceeded others in sanctity, or is esteemed greater in the Kingdome of heauen , what would this knowledg auaille him, vnlesse he should thereby humble himselfe the more in my sight, and stirre vp his mind to praile my name with greater seruour . His labour is much more acceptable vnto God, that thinketh of the greatnes of his sinnes, and his want of vertues, & how far off he is from the perfectiō of the Saints; then he that disputeth of their greatnes . It is better to pray to the Saints with deuotion & tears, and to craue their glorious suffrages

with

with an humble mind , then to search their secrets with vaine curiosity .

8. They are well and right well contented, if men could content themselves and refraine from these vaine discourses . They glory not of their owne merits , for they ascribe no good vnto themselves , but attribute all to me , who of my infinite charity haue bestowed my blessings vpon them . They are replenished with so great loue of my Godhead , and so superabundant ioy , that there is no glory nor happines , that is , or can be wanting vnto them . All the Saints how much the higher they be in glory , so much the more humble they are in themselves , and neerer and deerer vnto me . And therefore thou hast it writtē , That they did cast their Crownes before God , and fell down vpon their faces before the Lambe , and adored him that liueth for euer .

Apoc. 4.

9. Many inquire who is greatest in the Kingdome of God , that know not whether they shall euer be numbred there amongst the least . It

Matt. 18.

is no small matter to be euen the least in heauen, where all are great, for that all there shall be called, and shalbe indeed the Sonnes of God. The least there shall be great among thousands, and the sinner of a hundred yeares shall die. For when the Disciples asked who was the greater in the Kingdome of heauen, they receaued this answer: Vnlesse you be conuerted, & become as little children you shall not enter into the Kingdome of heauen. Whosoever therfore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the Kingdome of heauen.

Matt. 6.

10. Woe be vnto them that disdain to humble themselves willingly with little children. For the low gate of the Kingdome of heauen, will not giue them entrance. And woe be to the rich, that haue their comforts heere, for whilst the poore enter into the Kingdome of God, they shall be wayting without. Reioyce you that be humble: and you that be poore, be you glad, for yours is the Kingdome of God, if you walke according vnto truth.

Matt. 5.

CHAP. LIX.

*That all our hope and trust is to be
fixed in God alone.*

LORD, * what trust haue I in
this world? Or what is the grea-
test comfort, that all thinges vnder
heauen do yield me? Is it not thou,
my Lord God, whose mercies are
without number? Where hath it
bene well with me without thee?
Or when could it be ill with me,
when thou wert present? I had ra-
ther be poore for thee, then rich
without thee. I rather chooseto be
a Pilgrime in earth with thee, then
to possesse heauen without thee
Where thou art, there is heauen:
and there is death and hell, where
thou art not. Thou art my desire,
and therfore it behoueth me to send
forth deep sighes from my hart, and
crie and pray vnto thee. For I haue
none to trust vnto, none that can
help me in tyme of necessity, but
thee alone, my God. Thou art my
hope, and my trust; thou art my

* The
Seruant.

comforter , and most faithfull vnto me in all my distresses.

Phil. 2.

2. All men seeke their owne gaine , thou only seekest my saluatiō and my profit, and turnest all things to my good. Although thou permittest many temptations to assault me , & many aduersities to befall me , yet thou ordainest all this to my good and profit , who art wont to proue thy beloued seruants a thousand waies . In which prooffe thou oughtest no lesse to be loued and praysed , then if thou didest replenish me with heauenly comforts .

3. In thee therefore , my Lord God , I put my whole hope and refuge : in thee I place my tribulation and anguish , for I finde all to be weake and vnconstant , whatsoever I behould out of thee . For neither can many friends auaille , nor forcible helpers aid , nor wise counsellours giue profitable answer , nor the bookes of the learned comfort , nor any wealth deliuer , nor any secret , or pleasant place defend , if thou thy selfe doest not assist , help , com-

fort

fort, instruct, and keep vs.

4. For all things that seeme to be ordayned for the rest and solace of man, when thou art absent, are nothing, and do bring indeed no ioy, nor comfort at all. Thou therefore art the end of all that is good, the light of life, the depth of wisdom: and the most forcible comfort of thy seruants, is to trust in thee about all things. To thee therefore doe I lift vp myne eyes: In thee my God, the Father of mercies, I put my whole trust. Blesse and sanctifie my soule with thy heauenly blessings, that it may be made thy holy habitation, and the seat of thy eternall glory: and that nothing may be found in the Temple of thy greatnes, that may offend the eyes of thy Maiesty. According to the greatnesse of thy goodnesse, & multitude of thy mercies, take pittie vpon me, and heare the prayer of thy poore seruant, who is farre exiled from thee in the land of the shadow of death. Protect,

and keep the soule of thy servant, amidst so many dangers of this corruptible life, and by the assistance of thy grace, direct it in the way of peace, to the country of everlasting light, Amen.

*The end of the
third Booke.*

O F



OF THE
FOLLOWING
OF CHRIST.

THE FOVRTH BOOKE.

*A deuout Exhortation vnto the
blessed Sacrament.*

The voice of Christ.



COME vnto me all ye
that labour & are bur-
dened, & I will refresh
you, saith our Lord:
The bread which I
will giue, is my flesh,
for the life of the world. Take yee
and eate, this is my body that shall

be

Matt. 11.

Ioan. 6.

Matt. 26.

I. C. I. II.

Ioan. 6.

be deliuered for you. Doe this for the commemoration of me. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my bloud, remaineth in me, and I in him. The words which I haue spoken vnto you, are spirit and life.

CHAP. I.

*With how great reuerence Christ
ought to be receaued.*

THES E are thy words o Christ, euerlasting Truth, though not spoken all at one time, nor written in one and the selfe same place. Because therefore they are thine and true, they are all thankfully & faithfully to be receaued by me. They are thine, and thou hast spoken thē, and they are mine also, because thou hast spoken them for my saluation. I willingly receaue them from thy mouth, that they may be the deeperimprinted in my hart. These deuout words so full of sweetnesse and loue, doe stirre me vp, but mine owne offences doe amaze me, and

my

my impure conscience driueth me back from the receauing of so great mysteries . The sweetnesse of thy words doth encourage me , but the multitude of my sinnes do oppresse me .

2 . Thour commaundest me to come confidently vnto thee , if I will haue part with thee : and to receaue the food of immortality , if I desire to obtaine euerlasting life and glory . Come , sayst thou , vnto me , al ye that labour and are burdened , and I will refreth you . O sweet and louely word in the eare of a sinner , that thou my Lord God shouldest inuite the poore and needy to receaue thy most blessed body . But who am I Lord , that I may presume to approach vnto thee ? behould the heauens cannot containe thee , and thou sayst : Come ye all vnto me .

3 . What meaneth this most pious benignity , and so louing inuitation ? How shal I dare to come , that know not any good in me , wherevpon I may presume ? How shall I bring thee into my house , that haue often offended thy most gracious

counte-

Matt. 11.

Matt. 12.

Matt. 11.

countenance? The Angels and the Archangels honour thee, the Saints and iust men do feare thee; and thou saist, Come ye all vnto me. Vnlesse thou o Lord didst say it, who would beliene it to be true? And vnlesse thou didst comaund it, who would dare to come vnto thee? Behould Noe a iust man laboured a hundred yeares in the building of the Arke, that he might be saued with a few: and how can I in one houres space preparte my selfe to receaue with reuerence the maker of the world?

Gen. 6.

4. Moyses thy great seruant, & especiall friend, made an Arke of incorruptible wood, which also he couered with most pure gold, to put the Tables of the Law therein: and I a rotten creature, how shall I so lightly dare to receaue the maker of the Law, and the giuer of life? Salomon the wisest of the Kings of Israel, bestowed seauen yeares in building a magnificent Temple, in praise of thy name, & celebrated the feast of the Dedication therof eight daies togeather: he offered a thousand peaceable sacrifices, and set the

3. Reg. 6.

3. Reg. 8.

Arke

Ark in the place prepared for it, with the sound of trumpets, and ioy: and I the most vnhappy and poorest of men, how shall I bring thee into my house, that can scarce spend one halfe houre deuoutly? and I would to God it were once almost one halfe houre, in worthy and due manner!

5. O my God, how much did they endeauour to please thee, and alas how little is that which I doe? How short time do I spend, when I prepare my selfe to receaue? I am seldome wholly recollected, very seldome altogether free from distraction; and yet surely no vndecent thought should occurre in the presence of thy Deity, nor any creature draw me vnto it: for I am not so harbour an Angell, but the Lord of Angels.

6. And yet there is great difference betweene the Arke & the Reliques therof, and thy most pure body with his vnspeakable vertues: betweene those legall sacrifices, figures of future things, and the true Sacrifice of thy body, the complement

of all ancient Sacrifices Why therefore do I not become more feruent in thy venerable presence? Wherefore do I not prepare my selfe with greater care to receaue thy sacred gifts, sith those holy ancient Patriarches, & Prophets, yea Kings also and Princes with the whole people haue shewed so great zeale of deuotion to thy diuine seruice?

2. Reg. 6.

7. The most deuout King Dauid daunced before the Arke of God with all his force, calling to mind the benefits bestowed in times past vpon his forefathers. He made Instruments of sundry kinds, he published Psalmes, and appointed the to be sung with ioy: himselfe also oftentimes played vpon the harpe. Being inspired with the grace of the holy Ghost, he taught the people of Israel to praise God with their whole hart, and with pleasant voyces euery day to blesse and praise him. If so great deuotion was then vsed, and such memory of diuine praise before the Arke of the Testament, what reuerence and deuotion is now to be performed by me, and all Christian

people in the presence of this Sacrament, in receauing the most precious body of Christ?

8. Many go to sundry places to visite the Reliques of Saints, and are astonished when they heare of their miraculous works: they behould the spacious buildings of their Churches, & kisse their sacred bones wrapped in silke and gould: And behold thou art heere present with me on the altar, my God, the Holy of Holies, the maker of all things, & Lord of Angels. Oftentimes in those deuotions there is but curiosity of men and nouelty of the beholders in the seeing of such sights, and little fruite of amendment is gotten thereby, especially where there is so vnconstant wandring without true contrition. But here in the Sacrament of the altar, thou art present, my Lord, God and Man, Christ Iesus, where also plentifull fruite of euerlasting saluation is obtained, as often as thou art worthily, and deuoutly receaued. No leuity, no curiosity, or sensuallity draweth vnto this, but firme faith, deuout hope, and sin-

cere: charity.

9. O God the invisible Creator of the world, how wonderfully dost thou deal with vs! how sweetly and graciously dost thou dispose of all things with thy elect, to whome thou offerest thy selfe to be receaved in the Sacrament! O this exceedeth all vnderstanding of man; this chiefly draweth the hearts of the deuout, and inflameth their desire. For thy true faithfull seruants that dispose their whole life to amendment, by this most worthy Sacrament, oftentimes receaue great grace of deuotion, and loue of vertue.

10. O admirable & hidden grace of this Sacrament, which only the faithfull of Christ do know: but the vnfaithfull, and such as are slaues vnto sinne, cannot conceaue nor feelee. In this Sacrament spirituall grace is giuen, and lost vertue is restored in the soule: and beautie disfigured by sinne returneth againe. This grace is sometimes so great, that with the fulnesse of deuotion, which is here giuen, not only the mind, but the weake body also feeleth great in-

crease

crease of strength.

11. Our coldnesse & negligence surely is much to be bewailed & pitied, that we are not drawne with greater affection to receaue Christ, in whome all the hope and merit of those that are to be saued doth consist. For he is our sanctification and redemption: he is the comfort of passengers, and the euerlasting fruition of Saints. It is much therefore to be lamented that many do so little consider this comfortable mystrie, which reioyceth heauen, and preserueth the whole world. O blindnes and hardnes of mans hart, that doth not more deeply weigh the greatnes of so vnspcakable a gift, but rather comes by the daily vse therof, to regard it little or nothing.

12. For if this most holy Sacrament should be celebrated in one place only, and consecrated by one only Priest in the world: with how great desire doest thou thinke would men be affected to that place: and what esteeme would they haue of such a Priest of Almighty God, by whome they might enioy the conso-

lation of these diuine mysteries? but now there are many Priests, & Christ is offered vp in many places, that so the grace and loue of God to man may appeare so much the greater, how much the more this sacred Cōmuniō is cōmon through the world. Thāke be vnto thee, good Iesu, euerlasting Pastour of our souls, that hast vouchsafed to refresh vs poore & banished men, with thy precious Body & Bloud, & to inuite vs to the receauing of these mysteries with the words of thy owne mouth, saying: Come vnto me all ye that labour and are burdened, and I wil refresh you,

Matt. 11.

CHAP. II.

*That great goodnesse and charity of
God is bestowed vpon man in
this Sacrament.*

The voice of the Disciple.

PRESVMING of thy goodnesse and great mercy, o Lord, being sicke, I approach vnto my Sauour, hungry and thirsty to the fountaine

of

of life, needy to the King of heauen,
 a seruant vnto my Lord, a creature
 to my Creator, desolate to my mer-
 cifull comforter. But whence is this
 to me, that thou vouchsafest to
 come vnto me? Who am I that thou
 shouldest giue thy selfe vnto me?
 How dare a sinner presume to ap-
 peare before thee? And thou, how
 dost thou vouchsafe to come vnto
 a sinner? Thou knowest thy seruant,
 and seest that he hath no good thing
 in him, for which thou shouldest
 bestow this benefit vpon him I con-
 fesse therfore my vnworthinesse, &
 I acknowledg thy goodnesse: I praise
 thy mercy, and giue thee thanks for
 this thy vnspeakable charity. For
 thou dost this for thine owne good-
 nesse, not for any merits of mine, to
 the end that thy goodnesse may be
 better knowne vnto me, thy charity
 more abundantly shewed, and thy
 humility more highly commended.
 Since therfore it is thy pleasure, and
 hast commanded that it should be so,
 this thy bounty is also pleasing to me,
 and do with that my offences may
 be no hinderance.

Luc. 1.

2. O most sweet and bountifull Iesu, how great reuerēce & thanks, with perpetuall praise is due vnto thee for the receauing of thy sacred body, whose worth and dignity no man is able to expresse! But what shall I thinke of at this time, now that I am to receaue this diuine Sacrament, and to approach vnto my Lord, to whome I am not able to giue due reuerence, and yet I desire to receate him deuourly? What can I thinke better, and more profitable, then to humble my selfe wholly before thee, and to exalt thy infinite goodnesse aboute me? I praise thee my God, & will exalt thee for euer: and I do despise, and submit my self vnto thee, euen into the depth of my vnworthinesse.

3. Behould thou art the Holy of Holies, and I the skum of sinners! behold thou bowest thy selfe downe vnto me, who am not worthy so much as to looke vp vnto thee! Behould thou comcest vnto me: it is thy will to be with me, thou inuitest me to thy banquet. Thou wilt giue me the food of heauen, and

bread

Psal. 77.

Ioan. 6.

bread of Angels to eate, which is no other truely then thy selfe, the liuely bread, that descendest from heauen, and giuest life vnto the world.

4. Behould from whence this loue proceedeth! what kind of fauour and benignity is this which shineth vpon vs! What thanks and praises are due vnto thee for these benefits! O how good and profitable was thy counsell, when thou ordainedst it! How sweet & pleasant the banquet when thou gauest thy selfe to be our food! How wonderfull thy worke, o Lord, how powerfull thy vertue, how vnspeakable thy truth! For thou saidst the word, and all things were made; & this was done which thou commaundest.

Gen. 1 &
Psal. 148.

5. A thing of great admiration, and worthy of faith, and surpassing the vnderstanding of man, that thou, my Lord God, true God & Man, shouldest be wholly cōteyned vnder a small forme of bread & wine, and shouldest be eaten by the receauer without being cōsumed. Thou who art the Lord of all things, and standest in need of none, hast pleased to

dwell in vs by meanes of this thy Sacrament: preſerue my heart and body vnſpotted, that with a cheerfull and pure conſcience I may often celebrate thy myſteries, and receaue the to my euerlaſting health, which thou haſt chiefly ordained & inſtituted for thy honour, and perpetuall memory.

6. Reioyce my ſoule, and giue thanks vnto God for ſo noble a gift, and ſingular comfort left vnto thee in this vale of teares. For as often as thou calleſt to mind this myſterie, and receauelt the body of Chriſt: ſo often doſt thou worke the worke of thy redemption, and art made partaker of all the merits of Chriſt. For the charity of Chriſt is neuer diminished, and the greatneſſe of his mercy is neuer leſſened. Therefore thou oughteſt alwaies to diſpoſe thy ſelfe hereunto by a freſh renewing of thy mind, and to weigh with attentive conſideration this great myſtery of thy ſaluation. So great, new, and ioyfull it ought to ſeeme vnto thee, when thou ſayeſt, or heareſt Maſſe, as if the ſame day Chriſt firſt

deſcen-

descending into the wombe of the Virgin, were become man, or hanging on the crosse, did suffer and dye for the saluation of mankind.

CHAP. III.

That it is profitable to communicate often.

BEHOLD, o Lord, I come vnto thee, that I may be comforted in thy gift, and be delighted in thy holy banquet, which thou, o Lord hast prepared in thy sweetnesse, for the poore. Behold in thee is all whatsoeuer I can, or ought to desire: thou art my health, and my redemption, my hope and my strength, my honour, and my glory. Make ioyfull therefore this day, the soule of thy seruant, for that I haue lifted it vp to thee my sweet Iesus I desire to receaue thee now with deuotion, and reuerence. I do long to bring thee into my house, that with Zachæus I may deserue to be blessed by thee, and numbred amongst the children of Abraham. My soule thirsteth

Ps. 67.

Psal. 85.

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steeth to receaue thy body, my heart desireth to be vnited with thee.

12. Giue thy selfe to me, and it sufficeth. For besides thee no comfort is available. I cannot be without thee, nor liue without thy visitation. And therefore I must often come vnto thee, and receaue thee as the only remedy of my health, least perhaps I faint in the way, if I be deprived of thy heauenly food. For so, most mercifull Iesus, thou once didst say, preaching to the people, and curing sundry diseases: I will not send them home fasting, least they faint in the way. Deale thou therefore in like manner now with me, who hast vouchsafed to leaue thy selfe in the Sacrament for the comfort of the faithfull. For thou art the sweet refection of the soule, and he that eateth thee worthily, shall be partaker, and heire of everlasting glory. It is necessary for me, that do so often fall and sinne, so quickly wax dull and faint, that by often prayers & confession, and receauing of thy sacred body, I renew, cleanse, and inflame my selfe, least perhaps

Matt. 15.

Matt. 8.

by

by long abstayning I fall from my holy purpose.

3. For man is prone vnto euill from his youth, and vnlesse this diuine remedie help him, he quickly slideth to worse. This holy Cōmunion therfore draweth back from euill, and comforteth in good, For if I be now so often slack and negligent when I communicate, or say Masse, what would become of me, if I receaued not this remedy, and sought not after so great a help? Though euery day I be not fit, nor well prepared to say Masse, I will endeavour notwithstanding at conuenient times to receaue the diuine mysteries, and make my selfe partaker of so great a grace. For this is the onely chiefe comfort of a faithfull soule, whilst she wandreth frō thee in this mortall body, that being mindfull of her God, she often receaue her Beloued with a deuout mind.

4. O wonderfull benignity of thy mercy towards vs, that thou, Lord God, the Creatour and giuer of life to all spirits, doest vouchsafe

Gen. 8.

to come vnto a poore soule, & with thy whole Godhead and humanity to replenish her hunger O happy mind and blessed soule, that deserueth to receaue thee, her Lord God, with deuout affection, and in receauing of thee to be filled with spirituall ioy! O how great a Lord doth she intertaine! How beloued a ghest doth she harbour! how pleasant a companion doth she receaue! how faithfull a friend doth she accept! how beautifull and noble a spouse doth she imbrace! she imbraceth him who is to be loued aboue all that is beloued, and aboue all things that may be desired. Let heauen and earth and all their beauty be silent in thy presence. For what beauty and praise soeuer they haue, it is receaued from thy bounty, and shall not equall the beauty of thy name, of whose wisdom there is no end.

Psal. 146.

CHAP.

CHAP. IIII.

*That many benefits are bestowed
vpon them that communi-
cate deuoutly.*

The voice of the Disciple.

MY Lord God, preuent thy
seruant in the blessings of thy
sweetnesse, that I may deserue to ap-
proach worthily and deuoutly to
thy holy Sacrament: stirre vp my
heart vnto thee, and deliuer me frō
all heauines and slouth: visit me with
thy comfort, that I may tast in spi-
rit thy sweetnesse, which plentifully
lyeth hid in this Sacrament, as a
fountaine, Giue light also to mine
eyes to behold so great a mystery,
and strengthen me to belieue it with
vndoubted faith. For it is thy worke,
and not mans power, thy sacred in-
stitution, not mans inuention. For
no man is of himselfe able to com-
prehend & vnderstand these things,
which surpasse the vnderstanding e-
uen of Angels. What therefore shall

Psal. 20.

Psal. 103.

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I vnworthy sinner, earth and ashes,
be able to search and comprehend of
so high and sacred a mysterie?

2. O Lord in sincerity of hart,
with a good and firme faith, and at
thy commandement; I come vnto
thee with hope and reuerence, and
do verily beleue, that thou art heere
present in the Sacrament, God and
Man. Thy holy pleasure is, that I
receaue thee, and by charity do vnite
my selfe vnto thee. Wherefore I do
recurre vnto thy Clemency, and do
craue speciall grace, that I may who-
ly melt in thee, and abound with
loue, and heerafter neuer admit
any externall comfort. For this most
high and worthy Sacrament is the
health of the soule and body, the
remedy of all spirituall sicknes: by
it my vices are cured, my passions
bridled, temptations overcome or
weakened, greater grace infused,
vertue increased, faith confirmed,
hope strengthened, and charity in-
flamed and enlarged.

3. For thou hast bestowed, &
still oftentimes dost bestow many
benefits in this Sacrament vpon thy
beloued

beloued that receaue it deuoutly,
 my God the Protector of my soule,
 the strengthener of humane frailty,
 and the giuer of all inward comfort.
 Thou impartest vnto them much
 comfort against sundry tribulations,
 and liftest them vp from the depth
 of their owne basenes, to the hope
 of thy protection, and doest inward-
 ly refresh and illustrate them with a
 certaine new grace, in such sort, that
 they who before Communion felt
 themselues heavy and indisposed,
 afterwards being strengthened with
 heavenly meate and drinke, do find
 in themselues a great change to the
 better: Which thou doest so dispose
 to thy elect, that they may truly ac-
 knowledge, and patiently proue,
 how great their owne infirmity is,
 and what benefit and grace they re-
 ceauē from thee. For they of them-
 selues are cold, dull, and vndeouour,
 but by thee they are made feruent,
 agile, and full of deuotion. For who
 is there, that approaching humbly
 vnto the Fountaine of sweetnesse,
 doth not carry away from thence at
 least some little sweetnesse? Or who

standing

Isa. 12.
Leuit. 6.

standing by a great fire, receaueth not some small heate therby? Thou art a fountaine alwaies full & overflowing, a fire etier burning and neuer decaying.

4. Wherefore if I cannot draw at the full out of this fountaine, nor drinke my fill, I will notwithstanding set my lips to the mouth of this heavenly conduite, that I may draw from thence at least some small drop to refresh my thirst, to the end I wither not wholly away and perish. And though I be not altogether celestiall, nor so inflamed as the Cherubims & Seraphims; notwithstanding I will endeavour to apply my selfe to deuotion, and dispose my heart to obtaine some small sparke of diuine fire by humble receauing of this life-giuing Sacrament. And whatsoeuer is hereunto wanting in me, good Iesu, most blessed Sauiour, do thou supply for me, most benigne & gracious Lord, who hast vouchsafed to call vs vnto thee, saying: Come vnto me all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.

Matt. 11.

5. I labour in the sweate of my browes, I am vexed with griefe of hart, I am burdened with sins, I am troubled with temptations, I am intangled and oppressed with many euill passions, and there is none to help me, none to deliuer and saue me, but thou, Lord God, my Sauour, to whome I commit my selfe, and all mine, that thou maist keep me, and bring me to life cuerlasting. Receaue me to the honour and glory of thy name, who hast prepared thy Body and Bloud to be my meat and my drinke. Graunt, Lord God, my Sauour, that by frequenting thy mysteries, my zeale and deuotion may increase.

CHAP. V.

*Of the dignity of this Sacrament,
and Priestly function.*

The voice of Christ.

IF thou hadst angelicall purity, & the sanctity of S. Iohn Baptist, thou wert not worthy to receaue,

Matt. 11.

Psal. 77.

Gen. 1.
Psal. 148.
Rom. 9.

nor handle this Sacrament. For it is not within the compasse of the desires of men, that man should consecrate and handle the Sacrament of Christ, and receaue for food the bread of Angells. A great mystery, and great is the dignity of Priests, to whome is graunted that, which is not permitted to the Angells. For Priests only instituted in the Church, haue power to celebrate, and consecrate the bodie of Christ. The Priest is the Minister of God, vsing the wordes of God; by Gods commaundement, and appointment; but God is there the principall actour, and inuisible worker, to whome is subiect all that he pleaseth, and all that he commaundeth, doth obey.

2. Thou oughtest therefore to giue more credit to God Almighty in this most excellent Sacrament, then to thine owne sense, or to any visible sign. And therefore thou art to come vnto this Mystery with feare and reuerence. Consider attentiuely with thy self, what that is, wherof the Ministry is deliuered vnto thee by the imposition of hands of the

Bishop.

Bishop. Behould thou art made a Priest, & consecrated to say Masse: see now that in due time thou offer Sacrifice vnto God faithfully & deuoutly, and carry thy selfe so, as thou maist be without reproofe. Thou hast not lightened thy burthē, but art now bound with a straiter band of discipline, and art obliged to a more perfect degree of sanctity. A Priest ought to be adorned with all kind of vertues, and to giue example of good life to others. His conuersation should not be according to the ordinary and common proceedings of men, but like to the Angels in heauen, or to perfect men on earth.

3. A Priest clothed in sacred garments is the Vicegerēt of Christ, to pray humbly, & with a prostrate mind vnto God for himselfe & the whole people. He hath before, and behind the signe of the Crosse of our Lord, to the end he may euer remember the Passion of Christ: he beareth the Crosse before him in the Vestement, that he may diligently behould the foot-steps of Christ,

1. Tim. 4.

Phil. 3.

Heb. 5.

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and feruently endeauour to follow them . He is behind marked with the crosse , that he may patiently suffer for God whatsoever aduersities shall be layd vpon him by others . He beareth the crosse before , that he may lament his owne sinnes , and the same he hath also behind , that he may with a compassionate hart bewaile the offences of others , and know that he is placed as a mediator betweene God and the sinner . Neither ought he to cease fro praiere and holy oblation , till he deserue to obtaine grace and mercy . When a Priest doth celebrate , he honoureth God , reioyceth the Angels , edifieth the Church , helpeth the liuing , giueth rest to the dead , and maketh himselfe partaker of all good deeds .

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

*An Interrogation of the exercise
before Communion.*

The voice of the Disciple.

VHEN I weigh thy greatness, o Lord, and my unworthinesse, I tremble, and am confounded in my selfe. For if I come not vnto thee, I fly from life, & if I unworthily intrude my selfe, I incurre thy displeasure. What therefore shall I do my God, my helper, and my counsellour in necessity?

1. Teach me the right way, appoint me some brief exercise futable to this holy mystery of sacred Communion. For it is good for me to know, how I should severently & deuotously prepare my heart vnto thee, for the profitable receauing of thy Sacrament, or for the celebrating of so great and diuine a Sacrifice.

CHAP. VII.

*Of the discussing of our owne conscience,
and purpose of amendment.*

The voice of the Beloued.

ABOVE all things, the Priest of God ought to come to celebrate, handle, and receaue this Sacrament with great humility of hart, and lowly reuerence, with a full faith, and a Godly desire of the honour of the diuine Maiesty. Examine diligently thy conscience, and to thy power, purge and clense it with true contrition, and humble confession: so as there may be nothing in thee, that may be burdensome vnto thee, or that may breed thee remorse of conscience, and hinder thy free accessse to these heavenly mysteries. Repent thee of all thy sinnes in generall, and in particuler bewaile thy daily offences. And if thou hast time, confesse vnto God in the secret of thy hart, all the mysteries of thy disordered passions.

2. Lament and grieve, that thou art yet so subiect to sensuality, and so addicted to the world, so vnmortified in thy passions, so full of the motions of concupiscence, so vnwatchfull ouer thy outward senses, so often intangled with many vaine fantasies, so vehemently inclined to outward things, so negligent in the interior, so prone to laughter and immodesty, so hard to teares & compunction, so prompt to ease & pleasures of the flesh, so dull to austerity & seruour, so curious to heare newes and see vaine sights, so slack to imbrace that which tends to thine owne humiliation and contempt, so couetous of abundance, so niggardly in giuing, so fast in keeping, so inconsiderate in speach, so vnbridled to silence, so loose in manners, so outrageous in deedes, so greedy to meate, so deafe to the word of God, so hasty to rest, so slow to labour, so watchful to tales, so drowsy to watch in the seruice of God, so hasty to the end therof, so inconstant in attention, so negligent in saying thy office, so vndeuous in saying Masse, so dry

in receauing, so quickly distracted, so seldome wholly recollected, so suddainly moued to anger, so apt to take displeasure against another, so prone to iudge, so seuerer to reprehend, so ioyfull in prosperity, so weake in aduersity, so often purposing much good, and performing little.

3. These and other thy defects confessed, & bewailed with sorrow, and great dislike of thine owne infirmity, make a firme purpose alwaies to amend thy selfe, and to go forwards in vertue. Then with full resignation, and with thy whole will offer thy selfe vp to the honour of my name, a perpetuall sacrifice in the altar of thy hart, faithfully committing thy body & soule vnto me, that thou maist so also deserue to come worthily to offer sacrifice vnto God, and to receaue profitably the Sacrament of my body.

4. For there is no oblatiō more worthy, nor satisfaction greater, for the washing away of sinnes, then to offer vp our selues vnto God purely and wholly with the oblation of the

Body

Body of Christ in the Masse, and in Communion. And when a man shall haue done what lyeth in him, and shall be truly penitent, as I liue, saith our Lord, who will not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be conuerted and liue, I will not remember his sinnes any more, but they shall be all forgiven him, and fully pardoned.

Ezec. 18

CHAP. VIII.

*Of the oblation of Christ on the Crosse
and resignation of our selues :*

The voice of the Beloued

AS I willingly offered vp my selfe vnto God my Father, with my hands stretched forth on the Crosse, and my body naked for thy sinnes, so that nothing remained in me that was not turned into a sacrifice, for the appeasing of the diuine wrath; so oughtest thou also to offer vp thy selfe willingly vnto me daily in the Masse, as a pure and holy oblation, with thy whole force,

PROV. 23.

and desire, in as harty a manner as thou canst. What do I require of thee more, then that thou resigne thy selfe wholly vnto me? Whatsoever thou giuest besides thy selfe, is of little accompt in my sight, for I seeke not thy gift, but thee.

2. As it would not suffice thee to haue all things whatsoever besides me; so neither can it please me whatsoever thou giuest, if thou offerest not vpon thy selfe. Offer thy selfe vnto me, and giue thy selfe, all that thou art, for God, and thy offering shall be gratefull. Behould I offered vp my selfe wholly vnto my Father for thee, and gaue my whole body, & bloud for thy food, that I might be wholly thine, and thou remaine mine. But if thou abidest in thy selfe, and doest not offer thy selfe vp freely vnto my will, thy oblation is not entire, neither shall the vnion betweene vs be perfect. Therefore a free offering vp of thy selfe into the hands of God, ought to go before all thy actions, if thou wilt obtaine freedom and grace. For this cause few become inwardly illuminated,

and

and enioy true liberty of hart, for that they do not resolue wholly to deny themselves. My saying is vndoubtedly true: Vnlesse one forsake all, he cannot be my Disciple. If thou therfore wish to be mine, offer vp thy self vnto me with thy whole desires.

Ioan. 14.

CHAP. IX.

That we ought to offer vp our selues & all that is ours vnto God, and to pray for all.

The voice of the Disciple.

THINE, O Lord, are all things that are in heauen and in earth. I desire to offer vp my self vnto thee, as a free oblation, and to remaine alwaies thine. O Lord, in sincerity of my hart, I offer my selfe vnto thee this day, in sacrifice of perpetuall praise, to be thy seruant for euer. Receaue me with this holy oblation of thy precious body, which in the presence of the Angells inuisibly attending heere vpon thee, I

Psalm 27.

offer

off, r vp this day vnto thee, that it may be to the heath of my soule, and the saluation of all thy people.

2. I offer vnto thee, o Lord, all my sinnes & offences, which I haue committed in the sight of thee, and thy holy Angels, frō the day wherein I first could sinne, to this houre, vpon thy holy altar: that thou maist consume and burne them al with the fire of thy charity, and wash out all the staines of my sinnes, and cleanse my conscience from all offence, and restore to me againe thy grace, which I lost by sinne, forgiving me all my offences, and receauing me mercifully in the kisse of peace.

Psal. 38.

3. What can I do for my sinns, but humbly confesse and bewaile them, and intreat alwaies for mercy without intermission? I beseech thee, heare me in thy abundant mercy, when I stand before thee my God. All my sinnes are very displeasing vnto me. I will neuer commit them any more, but I am sory, and will be sory for thē as long as I liue, and am ready to do pennance and to satisfy for thē to the vttermost of

my

my power. Forgiue me, O God; forgiue me my sinnes, for thy holy names sake: saue my soule, which thou hast redeemed with thy precious Bloud. Behould I commit my selfe vnto thy mercy, I resigne my selfe ouer into thy hands. Do with me according to thy goodnesse, not according to my wickednes, and manifold iniquity.

4. I offer vp also vnto thee all whatsoever is good in me, although it be very little and imperfect, that thou maist amend and sanctify it, that thou maist make it gratefull and acceptable vnto thee, and alwaies perfect more and more that which thou hast begun, and bring me also, who am the slouthfull and vnprofitable creature, to a good and blessed end.

5. I offer vp also vnto thee all the Godly desires of deuout persons, the necessities of my parents & friends, my brethren & sisters, & of al those that are deere vnto me, & that haue done good either to my selfe or others for thy loue, and that haue desired me to say Masse and pray for

them

them; & all theirs, whether they be yet alive, or already dead: that they all may receaue the help of thy grace and comfort; protection from dangers, deliuerie from paine, and being freed from all euils, may ioyfully giue worthy thanks to thee.

6. I offer vp also vnto thee my prayers, and sacrifices, especially for them who haue in any thing wronged, grieved, or flandered me, or haue done me any damage or displeasure, and for those also, whome I haue at any time grieved, troubled, and scandalized by words, or deeds, wittingly, or at vnawares: that it may please thee to forgive vs al our sinnes & offences, one against the other. Take, o Lord, from our hearts all iealousie, all indignation, wrath, & contention, and whatsoeuer may hurt Charity, and weaken brotherly loue. Haue mercy, o Lord, haue mercy on those, that craue thy mercie: giue grace vnto them, that stand in need thereof, and graunt that we may be worthy to enioy thy grace, and attaine to life everlasting, Amen.

CHAP. X.

*That the holy Communion is not
lightly to be forborne.*

The voice of the Beloued.

THOU oughtest often to haue recourse to the Fountaine of grace, and of diuine mercy, to the Fountaine of goodnesse, and of all piety, that thou maist be cured of thy sinnes and passions, and deserue to be made more strong and vigilant against all temptations and deceipts of the Diuell. The enimie knowing the greatest profit, and remedie to consist in the holy Communion, endeauoureth by all meanes and occasions to withdraw and hinder faithfull and deuout persons from it.

2. Some when they purpose to receaue the sacred Communion, suffer greatest assaultes of the Diuell. For that wicked spirit (as is written in Iob) cometh amongst the Sonnes of God, to trouble them with his

accu-

accustomed malice & impiety, or to make them ouer fearfull & perplexed, that so he may diminish their affection, or by his subtile assaults, take away their faith, to the end they may either altogether abstaine from this diuine food, or at least come vnto it with lesse deuotion. But there is no heed to be taken of his frauds and malicious suggestions; be they neuer so filthy and hideous; but all is to be turned back vpon his owne head. We ought to contemne and scorne him miserable wreth, and not to omit the sacred communion for his assaults; and the troubles which he raiseth.

3. Oftentimes also an excessive care for the obtaining of deuotion, and a certaine anxiety for the making of our Confession hindreth vs. Follow in these occasions the counsell of the wise, and put away all anxiety and scruple, for it hindreth the grace of God, and overthroweth deuotion. Omit not for euery small vexation of the mind which happeneth, to receaue this holy Sacrament, but go presently to

con-

confession, and willingly forgiue others, whatsoeuer offences they haue done against thee : and if thou hast offended any, humbly craue pardon, and God will willingly forgiue thee.

4. What auaieth it to delay confession, and to defer receauing? Purge thy selfe with speed, spit out the venom presently, make hast to take a remedy, and thou shalt find it better, then if thou deferredst it long. If thou omittest it to day for this cause, perhaps to morrow some greater will fall out, & so thou maist be hindred a long time from these diuine mysteries, and become more vnfit. Stirre vp thy selfe, and shake off all heauinesse and slouth, with the greatest force and speed thou canst. For it profiteth nothing to continue long in disquietnes and trouble of mind, and for daily occurring impediments to withdraw thy selfe from the Sacraments. Yea it hurteth very much to defer Communion long, for it is wont to breed a great and dangerous dulnesse. Alas, some cold and dissolute people, do wil-

Y

lingly

lingly delay their confession, & do therefore defer the sacred Communion, least they should be bound to greater watch ouer themselues.

5. O how little charity & weake deuotion haue they that so easily omit the receauing of these holy mysteries: How happy is he and grateful to God, who ordereth so his life, and keepeth his conscience in such purity, that he may be readie and fit to communicate euery day, if it were conuenient & might be done without note. If any one sometimes abstaine of humility, or by reason of some lawfull impediment, he is to be commended for the reuerence which therein he sheweth. But if it proceedeth of coldnesse, he must stir himselfe vp, & do what lieth in him, and God will prosper his desire, for the good will he hath to do it, which God doth chiefly respect.

6. And when any lawfull hindrance doth happen, he must alwaies haue yet a good will, and louing desire to communicate, and so shall he not loose the fruit of the Sacrament. For a deuout person may euery day

and

and houre profitably and without let, receaue Christ spiritually: and yet on certaine daies, and at time appointed he ought to receaue Sacramentally. with a reuerend desire the Bodie of his Redeemer, and rather seeke the honour and glory of God, then his owne comfort. For he communicate mystically, and inuifibly fed, as often as he deuoutly calleth to mind the myserie of the Incarnation, and the Passion of Christ, and is inflamed with his loue.

1. Cor. 11.

7. He that prepareth not himself, but when a feast draweth neere, and when custome compelleth him therunto, shall often be vnprepared. Blessed is he that offereth himselfe vp as an Holocaust & burnt offering to our Lord, as often as he doth celebrate or communicate. Be not too long nor too short in saying Masse, but keep the accustomed manner of those, with whome thou liuest. Thou oughtest not to be tedious & troublesom to others, but to obserue the common course according to the appointment of thy Superiours: and

rather frame thy selfe to the profit of others, then to thine owne deuotion or desire.

CHAP. XI.

That the Body of Christ, and the holy Scripture are most necessary vnto a saythfull soule.

The voice of the Disciple.

O MOST sweet Lord Iesu, how great is the delight of a deuout soule that feasteth with thee in thy banquet, where there is no other meate offered to be eaten, but thy selfe her only beloued, and most to be desired aboue all the desires of her hart. And verily it would be a great comfort vnto me, to powre out teares from the bottome of my hart in thy presence, and with deuout Magdalen to wash thy feet with the teares of mine eyes. But where is this deuotion? Where is so plentifull shedding of holy teares? Surely in the sight of thee and thy holy Angels, my whole hart should

Luc. 7.

be

be inflamed and dissolue into teares forioy . For I enioy thee in the Sacrament really present , although hidden vnder another forme .

2. For to behould thee in thine owne diuine brightnesse , mine eyes would not be able to endure it , neither could the whole world stand in the clearnesse of the glory of thy Maiesty . Thou therefore prouidest for my weaknesse in that thou couerest thy selfe vnder the Sacrament . I do really enioy and adore him , whome the Angels adore in heauen, but I as yet for the time in faith , they in his proper forme , and without shadow . I ought to be contented with the light of true faith , and to walke therein , vntill the day of euerlasting brightnesse breake forth , and the shadowes of figures passe away . But when that shall come which is perfect , the vse of Sacraments shall cease . For the blessed in heavenly glory need not the remedy of Sacraments , who reioyce without end in the presence of God , behoulding his glory face to face , and being transformed by his brightnesse into the

1. Cor. 13

brightnesse of the incomprehensible Deity, they tast the word of God made flesh, as he was from the beginning, and as he remaineth for euer.

3. Whilst I remember these thy wonderfull works, all spirituall comfort whatsoever becometh very tedious vnto me: for that as long as I behould not my Lord openly in his glory, I make no accompt of whatsoever I see or heare in this life. Thou art my witnes, o God, that nothing can comfort me, no creature giue me rest, but thou my God, whome I desire to behould euerlastingly. But this is not possible whilst I remaine in this mortall life. Therefore I must frame my selfe to much patience, & submit my selfe to thee in all my desires. For thy Saints also, o Lord, who now reioyce with thee in the Kingdome of heauen, whilest they liued expected in faith and great patience the comming of thy glory. What they belieue, I belieue; what they hoped for, I expect; whither they are come, I trust I shall come by thy grace. In the

meane

Heb 10.
& 11.

meane time I will goe forward in faith, strengthened by the examples of the Saints. I haue also deuout bookes for my comfort, and for the guide of my life, and aboue all these, thy most holy Body for a singular remedie and refuge.

4. For I perceauē two things to be chiefly necessary for me in this life, without which this miserable life would be insupportable vnto me. Whilst I am kept in the prison of this bodie, I acknowledge my selfe to stand in need of two things, to wit, food, and light. Thou hast therefore giuen vnto me, weake creature, thy sacred Bodie for the refectiō of my soule & bodie, and hast set thy word as a light vnto my feet: without these two I could not well liue. For the word of God is the light of the soule, & thy Sacrament, the bread of life. These also may be called the two tables set on the one side & the other, in the store-house of the holy Church. One is the table of the holy Altar, conteyning the sacred bread, that is, the precious body of Christ: the other is of the di-

Ioan. 6.

Psal. 118.

Psal. 22.
Heb. 9. &
13.

uine law, conteyning holy doctrine, teaching true faith, and certainly leading to the part of the Temple within the veile, where are the Holy of Holies. Thanks be vnto thee, Lord Iesu, light of euerlasting light, for thy table of holy doctrine, at which thou seruest vs by thy seruants the Prophets and Apostles, & other Doctours.

5. Thanks be vnto thee Creatour and Redeemer of man, who to manifest thy charity to the whole world hast prepared a great supper, wherein thou hast offered to be eaten, not the mysticall lambe, but thine owne most sacred Body and Bloud, reioycing all the faithfull with thy holy banquet, and replenishing them to the full with thy heavenly Cuppe, in which are all the delights of heauen, and the holy Angels do feast with vs, but with a more happy sweetnesse.

6. O how great and honorable is the office of Priests, to whome it is graunted with sacred words to consecrate the Lord of Maiesty, with their lips to blesse him, with their

hands

I. Iuc. 14.

Ioan. 6.

Psal. 22.

Sap. 16.

hands to hould him, with their own mouth to receaue him, and to administer him to others! O how cleane ought to be those hands! How pure that mouth! How holy the body! How vnspotted the hart of the Priest, into whome the Author of purity so often entreth! Nothing but holy, no word but chaste and profitable ought to proceed from the mouth of the Priest, which so often receaueth the Sacrament of Christ.

7. Simple and chaste ought to be the eyes, that are wont to behould the body of Christ, the hands pure and lifted vp to heauen, that vse to handle the Creator of heauen and earth. Vnto the Priests especially it is said in the Law: Be ye holy, for that I your Lord God am holy.

Leuit. 19.
& 20.

8. Assist vs Almighty God with thy grace, that we, who haue vnder-taken the office of Priesthood, may serue thee worthily and deuoutly in all purity, and with a sincere conscience. And if we cannot liue in so great innocency as we ought to do, graunt vs notwithstanding in due manner to bewaile the sinnes which

we haue committed, and in the spirit of humility, and sincere intention to serue thee heerafter with more seruour.

CHAP. XII.

That he that is to communicate, ought to prepare himselfe with great diligence.

The voice of the Beloued.

Psal. 23.
& Matt.
5.

Marc. 14.
& Luc.
22.

1. Cor. 5.

I AM the louer of purity, and the giuer of all sanctitie. I seek a pure hart, and there is the place of my rest. Make ready & adorne for me a great chamber, and I will make with thee the Pasch with my Disciples. If thou wilt haue me come vnto thee, and remaine with thee, purge the old leauen, and make cleane the dwelling of thy hart: shut out the whole world, and all tumult of vices: sit like a sparrow solitary vpon the house top, and thinke of thy offences in the bitterness of thy soule. For every louer prepareth the best

and

and fairest roome for his beloued, & heerin is knowne the affection of him that intertaineth his beloued.

2. Know thou notwithstanding that the worth of no action of thine, is able to make this preparation sufficient, although thou shouldest prepare thy selfe a whole yeare together, and thinke on nothing else: but of my mercy and grace onely thou art suffred to come to my table, like a beggar inuited to dinner to a rich man, who hath nothing else to returne him for his benefits, but to humble himselfe, & giue him thâks. Doe what lieth in thee, and do it diligently, not for custome, nor for necessity, but with feare and reuerence, and harty affection receaue the body of thy beloued Lord and God, who vouchsafeth to come vnto thee. I am he that haue called thee, I haue commaunded it to be done, I will supply what is wanting in thee, come and receaue me.

3. When I bestow the grace of deuotion on thee, giue thanks to God, for it is giuen thee, not for that thou deseruest it, but because I haue

mercy on thee . If thou haue it not ; but rather feele thy selfe dry , continue in prayer , sigh and knock , and giue not ouer vntill thou deserue to receaue some crumme or drop of grace . Thou hast need of me , not I of thee , neither comest thou to sanctify me , but I come to sanctify and make thee better . Thou comest that thou maist be sanctified by me , and vnited vnto me , that thou maist receaue new grace , and be stirred vp againe to amendment . Neglect not this grace , but prepare thy hart with all diligence , and receaue thy beloued into thy soule .

4. But thou oughtest not only to prepare thy selfe to deuotion before Communion , but carefully also to conserue thy selfe therein , after thou hast receaued the Sacrament . Neither is the carefull guard c. thy selfe after , lesse exacted , then deuout preparation before . For a good guard afterwards is the best preparation thou canst make for the obtaining againe of greater grace , because that mans mind becometh very indisposed , if he presently powre

him-

himselfe out to outward comforts.
Beware of much talke, remaine in
some secret place, & inioy thy God.
For thou hast him whome all the
world cannot take from thee. I am
he, to whome thou oughtest wholly
to giue thy selfe, that so thou maist
liue heerafter not in thy selfe, but in
me, without all care.

CHAP. XIII.

*That a deuout soule ought to desire
with her whole hart to be
vnited vnto Cbrist in the
Sacrament.*

The voice of the Disciple.

HOVV may I obtaine this, o
Lord, that I may find thee a-
lone, and open my whole hart vnto
thee, and enioy thee as my soule de-
sireth? And that no man may looke
vpon me, nor any creature moue
me or respect me, but thou alone
maist speake vnto me, and I to thee,
as the beloued is wont to speake to

Exod. 33.
& Cāt. 8.

his

his beloved, and a friend to banquet with his friend. This I pray for, this I desire, that I may be wholly vnited vnto thee, and may withdraw my hart from all created things, & more & more, by sacred Cōmunion and often celebrating, learne to tast of heauenly and euerlasting sweetnes. O Lord God, when shall I be wholly vnited and absorpt by thee, and altogether forgetfull of my self! thou in me, and I in thee, and so graunt vs both to continue in one.

Ioan. 15.

Cant. 5.

2. Thou art my beloved, the choicest amōgst thousands, in whom my soule hath takē pleasure to dwell all the dayes of her life. Thou art my peace-maker in whome is greatest peace, and true rest, without whome is labour and sorrow, and infinite miserie. Thou art a hidden God, & thy counsell is not with the wicked, but thy speach is with the humble & simple of hart. O Lord, how sweet is thy spirit, who to the end, thou mightest shew thy sweetnes towards thy childrē, vouchsafest to feed them with the most delightful bread which descendeth from heauen, & is

Prou. 3.

Sap. 12.

full

full of all sweetnes. Surely there is no other Natiō so great, that hath Gods approaching vnto them, as thou our God art present to all thy faithfull, vnto whome for their daily comfort, and for the lifting vp of their harts to heauen, thou giuest thy selfe to be eaten and enioyed.

Deut. 4.

3. For what other Nation is there so famous, as the Christian people? or what creature vnder heauen so beloued, as a deuout soule, to whome God himselfe commeth to feed her with his glorious flesh? O vnspeakable grace! O admirable fauour! O infinite loue singularly bestowed vpon man! But what shall I giue vnto our Lord in returne of this grace, for so singular a charity? There is no other thing more gratefull that I am able to giue, then to bestow my hart wholly on my God, and to vnite it perfectly vnto him. Then shall all my bowels reioyce, when my soule shall be perfectly vnited vnto God. Then he will say vnto me: if thou wilt be with me, I will be with thee. And I will answer him: Vouchsafe, o Lord, to remaine

Psal. 115.

with

with me, and I will be with thee
This is my whole desire, that my
hart be vnited vnto thee.

CHAP. XIII.

*Of the feruent desire of some deuout
persons to receaue the Body of
Christ.*

The voice of the Disciple.

Psal. 30.

O HOW great is the store of
thy sweetnesse, o Lord, which
thou hast hidden for them that feare
thee! When I remember some deu-
out persons who come vnto thy
Sacrament, o Lord, with great deuo-
tion and affection, I am oftentimes
confounded, and blush within my
selfe, that I come so negligently and
coldly to thy Altar, to the table of
holy Communion, that I remaine
so dry, and without spirituall motiō
or feeling, that I am not wholly infla-
med in thy presence, my God, nor
so earnestly drawne and moued, as
many deuout persons haue beene,

who

who out of a vehement desire of receiving, and a feeling affection of hart, could not containe themselves from weeping, but with the desire both of soule and body they earnestly longed after thee, o God, the lively fountaine, being not otherwise able to temper nor satisfie their hunger, but by receiving thy body with all joy and spirituall greedinesse.

2. O most ardent faith of those persons, a probable argument of thy sacred presence. For these truly know their Lord in the breaking of bread, whose hart burneth so within them, whilst thou, o blessed Iesu, walkest with them. Such desire and devotion, so vehement loue and feruency is oftentimes far off from me. Be mercifull vnto me, good Iesu, sweet & benigne Lord, and graunt me thy poore needy creature, to feele sometimes at least, in this holy Sacrament, a little cordiall desire of thy loue that my faith may be more strengthened, my hope in thy goodnesse increased, and that my charity once perfectly inflamed, after the tasting of heauely Manna, may neuer decay.

Luc. 24.

3. Thy mercy, o Lord, is able to giue me the grace I desire, and to visit me in thy bounteous clemency with the spirit of seruour, when it shall please thee. For although I burn not with so great desire as those that are so especially deuoted vnto thee: yet notwithstanding by thy grace, I desire to haue this great inflamed desire, praying and craving that I may participate with all such thy seruient louers, and be numbred among them in their holy company.

CHAP. XV.

*That the grace of deuotion is obtained
by humilitie and denyall of
our selues.*

The voice of the Beloued.

THOU oughtest to seeke the grace of deuotion instantly, to aske it earnestly, to expect it patiently and confidently, to receiue it joyfully, to keep it humbly, to worke with

with it diligently; and to comit the time and manner of this heavenly visitation to God, vntill it shall be his pleasure to come. Thou oughtest chiefly to humble thy selfe, when thou feelest inwardly little or no deuotion, and yet not to be too much dejected, nor to grieve inordinate-ly for it. God often giueth in a short moment that, which he hath long time denied: he giueth sometimes in the end that, which in the beginning of prayer he disferred to graunt.

2. If grace should be alwaies presently giuen, and at hand euer with a wish, it could not be well indured by a weake man. Therefore deuotion is to be expected with good hope, and humble patience: yet impute it to thy selfe, and thy sinnes, when it is not giuen thee, or when it is secretly taken from thee. It is sometimes a small matter that hindreth and hideth grace from vs, if it be to be called small, and not rather a great matter, that hindreth so great a good. And if thou remoue this, be it great or small, and

perfectly overcome it, thou shalt haue thy desire.

3. For presently as soone as thou giuest thy selfe to God, and seekest not this, nor that, for thine owne pleasure or will, but fettest thy selfe wholly in me, thou shalt find thy selfe vnited vnto him, and quiet. For nothing will tast so well, and please thee so much, as the will and pleasure of God. Whosoever therefore with a sincere hart directeth his intention to God, and purgeth him selfe from all inordinate loue, or dislike of any creature, shall be most fit to receaue grace, and worthy of the gift of devotion. For our Lord bestoweth his blessing there, where he findeth his vessels empty. And how much the more perfectly one forsaketh these basest things, and directeth to him selfe by contempt of him selfe: so much the more speedily grace commeth, & entreth in more plentifully, and lifteth vp the hart that is free, to a higher state of grace.

4. Then shall he see, and abound, and wonder, and his hart

shall

shall be enlarged, because the hand of our Lord is with him, and he hath put himselfe wholly into his hand for euer. Behold so shall the man be blessed, that seeketh Almighty God with his whole hart, and taketh not his soule in vaine. This man deserueth great grace of diuine vnion, in receauing the holy Eucharist, for that he regardeth not his owne deuotion and comfort, but aboue all deuotion and comfort, he prizeth the honour and glory of God.

CHAP. XVI.

That we ought to manifest our necessities vnto Christ, and to craue his grace.

The voice of the Disciple.

O MOST sweet & louing Lord whome I now desire to receaue deuouly, thou knowest my infirmity, and the necessity which I endure, with how many finnes I am oppressed, how often I am grieued,

tempted, troubled, and defiled. I come vnto thee for remedy, I craue of thee thy heauenly comfort, and the ease of my paine. I speake to him that knoweth all thinges, to whome all my secrets are open, and who can only perfectly comfort and help me. Thou knowest what it is, wherof aboue all things I stand in most need, and how poore I am in vertues.

2. Behould I stand before thee, poore and naked, calling for grace, and crauing mercy. Refresh this thy hungry and needy creature, giue heate vnto my coldnesse with the fire of thy loue, giue light vnto my blindnesse with the brightnesse of thy presence. Turne all earthly things vnto me, into bitterness, all things grieuous and contrary, into patience, all base and created things, into contempt and obliuion. Lift vp my hart to thee in heauen, and suffer me not to wander vpon earth: be thou only sweet and delightfome vnto me from henceforth for euermore, for thou only art my meate, and my drinke, my loue and my

joy, my delight and all my good.

3. O that with thy presence thou wouldest wholly inflame, burn, and change me into thee, that I might be made one spirit with thee, by the grace of inward vnion and melting of burning loue ! Suffer me not to goe from thee hungrie and dry, but deale mercifully with me, as thou hast oftentimes dealt wonderfully with thy Saints. What mernaile if I should be wholly inflamed by thee, and dye in my selfe, sith thou art fire euer burning and neuer decaying, loue purifying the hart, & inlightening the vnderstanding.

CHAP. XVII.

Of burning loue & vehement desire to receaue Christ.

The voice of the Disciple.

VVITH great deuotion & burning loue, with most hartie affection and seruour I desire to receaue thee, o Lord, as many

Saints and deuout persons haue desired thee, when they receaued thy Sacrament, who were most pleasing vnto thee in holinesse of life, and most seruēt in deuotion. O my God the euerlasting loue, my whole good my happinesse without end, I would gladly receaue thee with the most vehement desire, and worthy reuerence, that any of the Saints euer had, or could feele.

2. And although I be vnworthy to haue all those feelings of deuotion, yet I offer vnto thee the whole affection of my hart, as if I alone had those most sweet inflamed desires: yea whatsoeuer also a deuout mind can conceaue and desire, all that, with greatest reuerence, and most inward affection I offer and present vnto thee. I wish to reserue nothing to my selfe, but freely and most willingly to sacrifice my selfe and all mine vnto thee, my Lord God, my Creatour, and my Redeemer. I desire to receaue thee this day with such affection, reuerence, praise and honour, with such gratitude, worthinesse, and loue, with such faith,

hope

hope, and purity, as thy most blessed Mother the glorious Virgin Mary receaued, and desired thee, when she humbly and deuoutly answered the Angell, who declared vnto her the mystery of the Incarnation, and sayd: Behold the handmaid of our Lord, let it be done vnto me according to thy word.

Luc. 1.

3 And as thy blessed Forerunner, the most excellent amongst the Saints Iohn Baptist cheerfully leaped with ioy of the holy Ghost, whilst he was yet shut vp in his mothers wombe: and afterwards seing Iesus walking amongst men, humbling himselfe very much, said with deuout affection: The friend of the Bridegrome that standeth & heareth him, reioyceth with ioy for the voice of the Bridegrome: so I also wish to be inflamed with great and holy desires, and to offer my selfe vp to thee with my whole hart. Wherefore I offer also and present vnto thee the ioyes, seruent desires, excesses of mind, spirituall illuminations, & heavenly visions of all deuout harts, with all the vertues and praises exer-

Iohn. 3.

cised, and to be exercised by all creatures in heaven and earth, for my selfe, and all such as are commended to me in prayer, that by all thou maist be worthily praised, and glorified for ever.

4. To Receaite, my Lord God, the affections of my hart and desires, which I haue to giue thee, infinite praise and thankes, which according to the measure of thy vnspcakable greatnesse are due vnto thee. These I yield thee, and desire to yield thee every day and moment, and I doe intreate, and intire all the heauenly spirits, and all thy deuout seruants to giue thankes and praises together with me.

5. Let all People, Tribes, and Tongues praise thee, and magnify thy holy and sweet name with great ioy, and seruent deuotion: and let all that reuerently and deuoutly celebrate thy most high Sacrament, and receaite it with full faith, deserue to find grace, and mercy at thy hands, and pray humbly for me sinfull creature. And when they shall haue obtained their desired deuotion

and ioyfull vnion, and depart from thy sacred heauenly table well comforted and meruailously refreshed, let them vouchsafe to remember my poore and needy soule.

CHAP. XVIII.

That a man be not a curious searcher of this Sacrament, but an humble follower of Christ, submitting his sense vnto faith.

The voice of the Beloued.

THOU oughtest to beware of curious and vnprofitable searching into this most profound Sacrament, if thou wilt not sink into the depth of doubt. He that is a searcher of Maiesty, shalbe oppressed by glory. God is able to worke more then man can vnderstand. A pious and humble inquiry of truth is tolerable, so be thou alwaies ready to be taught, and do endeavour to walke in the sound pathes of the ancient Fathers.

PROV. 25.

doctrine.

2. Blessed is that simplicity, that forsaketh the difficult waies of questions, and goeth on in the plaine and assured path of Gods Commandements. Many haue lost deuotion, whilst they would search after high things. Faith and sincere life are exacted at thy hands, not height of vnderstanding, nor the depth of the mysteries of God. If thou doest not vnderstand, nor conceaue those things that are vnder thee, how shalt thou be able to comprehend those that are aboue thee? Submit thy selfe to God, and let thy sense be subiect to faith, and the light of knowledge shall be giuen thee in that degree, as shall be profitable and necessary for thee.

3. Some are grievously tempted about faith and the Sacrament, but this is not to be imputed to the, but rather to the enimie. Do not regard nor dispute with thy thoughts, neither do thou giue answer to the doubts moued by the enimie, but heliue the words of God, heliue his Saintes and Prophets, and the wicked Serpent will fly from thee.

It is oftentimes very profitable to the servant of God to suffer such things. For he tempteth not Infidels and sinners, whome he already securely possesseth, but he sundry waies tempteth & vexeth the faithfull and deuout.

4. Go forward therefore with a sincere and vndoubted faith, and come to the Sacrament with vnfaigned reuerence. And whatsoever thou art not able to vnderstand, commit securely to Almighty God. God deceaueth thee not: he is deceaued that trusteth too much to himselfe. God walketh with the simple, reueleth himselfe to the humble, giueth vnderstanding to little ones, openeth the senses of pure minds, and hideth grace from the curious and proud. Humane reason is weake, and may be deceaued, but true sayth cannot be deceaued.

5. All reason & naturall search ought to follow faith, not to go before it, nor impugne it. For faith and loue do chiefly excell, & worke in a hidden manner in this most blessed and excellent Sacrament.

God

Ps. 18. &
118.
Matt. 23.

God, who is everlasting, and of infinite power, doth great and inscrutable things in heaven and in earth, and there is no searching of his wonderfull workes. If the workes of God were such, as might be easily comprehended by humane reason, they were not to be called wonderfull and unspeakable.

FINIS.

